

COMIC BOOK



TALES



FROM THE

CRYPT

THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF EC COMICS
AND THE
HIT TELEVISION SERIES

BY
DREY
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TALES FROM THE CRYPT

THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES

by Digby Diehl

Designed by David Kaestle and Rick DeMonico

Acknowledgments

The most enduring legacy of Bill Gaines is laughter, as I have discovered in my research for this book. He had the King Cosmos touch; his friends, his colleagues, and his family—apparently, everyone whose life he touched—partake of the infectious good humor. The same spirit, obviously passed on through the EC comics, runs through the creative crew connected with Tales from the Crypt Productions in Hollywood. I haven't stopped laughing since I began this project—and I can assure you that this is not always the case in researching and writing books.

Any large picture book is a collaborative undertaking, and this one has been more so than most. I am greatly indebted to many people who are listed below, but there are four whose contributions have been at least equal to my own.

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This book showcases some of the best artists art ever created and deserves a good measure of its visual impact from that art. The caliber of artists who worked at *Joko* is the only television legend. I owe a very special thanks to all these guys and gals. They walk, as the designers of the *Joko* book, look good.

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—David Karate



“A lot of people have the idea we’re a bunch of monsters who sit around drooling and dreaming up horror and filth. That’s not true. We try to entertain and educate. That’s all there is to it.”

— Bill Gaines

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In the Beginning

We in the United States have come to only a late-blooming appreciation of comic books as a mirror of our culture. In Europe and Japan, comic books and graphic novels have been revered as art forms for decades. Here, however, for most of their existence, comics were looked down upon as unworthy and insignificant reading matter. Comic books were considered mindless, often scurrilous trash, consumed by children and young adults with too much time and too little intellectual capacity. Lost upon the adults who disparaged them was an enduring truth that was obvious to every kid who ever bought one—comic books are great fun.

The comic book as we have come to know and love it is a hybrid—a cross between the newspaper comic strip and the “pulp” magazine.

In 1896, Richard F. Outcault's *The Yellow Kid* hit the streets, first in Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, then in *The New York Journal*, a paper published by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. Part of what was appealing about the Yellow Kid was that he really was yellow—he was often clad in a bright yellow nightgown (upon which his dialogue was written). This was a new wrinkle in the newspaper business. Up until that time, the presses had been able to crank out a sickly jaundiced yellow, but an honest-to-goodness egg yolk or daffodil hue had been unattainable. Now that they could do so, many newspapers went overboard on the use of bright yellow, often they were dailies that featured reports on the more sensational crimes and juicy scandals of the day. Hence the term “yellow journalism” was born (and frequently applied to newspapers in the Hearst chain.) With his bad grammar, his do-ah-see-daw spelling, and his irreverence, the Yellow Kid was a child of the streets (most precisely of Hogan's Alley). A true

populist, his spunky attitude matched the elbows-out brushiness of New York itself.

The Yellow Kid was christened “Mickey Dugan” in August of '96, but it was two months later that he cemented his place in comic history. On October 25, 1896, he appeared not just in a single frame diagram with the other motley denizens of Hogan's Alley (who share much in common with Spunky & Our Gang), but in a series of five drawings that also featured a parent and a photograph—in other words, a comic strip. Within just a few weeks, Outcault ruled in fine lines to separate the drawings, which became numbered panels.

Throughout the teens and Roaring Twenties, the comic strip continued to grow in popularity. For the most part during these decades, however, the strips were generally literal comic, generally focusing on the trials and tribulations of daily domestic life, not unlike early TV sitcoms. In that regard, there is much that links Jiggs and Maggie of *Bringing Up Father* with Lucy and Desi or Ralph and Alice Crandall. (Although a

One of Outcault's innovations was the introduction of balloons dialogue that was essential to understanding the comic strip.



Munsey's magazine became a success, the more so after his top writer, Edgar Rice Burroughs, began a series of series starting a white man who went native in Africa. In 1912, Tarzan of the Apes became the first hero of pulp fiction, and spawned a whole industry of spinoffs and imitations.



Before it was a movie title, "pulp fiction" was a type of popular literature.

same line; Eric Young's *Blonde* (1930) was yet another link in the same chain.)

Before it was a Quentin Tarantino movie, "pulp fiction" really was a type of popular literature. The roots of the genre is rooted in its means of publication. Just before the turn of the century, the cheapest grade of paper was called "wood pulp" or simply "pulp." In 1896, the same year that *The Yellow Kid* debuted, a publisher named Frank Munsey began putting out an inexpensive magazine named *The All-Story Magazine*, later renamed *Argosy*. *Argosy* specialized in short tales of action and adventure, and was printed on pulp-grade paper.

From dime store novels to bookie rippers to true crime to supermarket tabloids, pulps are the ancestors of a wide range of "trashy" literature—the kind of reading matter every parent feared was hidden in the bookshelf behind the Charles Dickens, *Anna Karenina*, Gable, or Rudyard Kipling. (Never mind that it was also the kind of reading matter that mothers and father pecked up and reprinted themselves.) A healthy mix of adventure, fantasy, and violence, early pulps also featured a whiff of sexual innuendo, with well-muscled heroes, damsels in distress, and Society Whiplash villains out to "get the girl."



Two of the most important pulps were *Black Hood* (1926), which championed hardboiled detective fiction by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, and *Blond Tale*, a horror pulp that carried stories by H. P. Lovecraft and later Ray Bradbury.



Another was *Amazing Science Fiction* (1926), the first science fiction pulp, whose futuristic title character Buck Rogers first appeared in 1928. He became a comic strip one year later.

In 1929, the comic strip and pulp fiction merged.

On January 7 of that year, both Tarzan and Buck Rogers made the transition from prose to picture, becoming comic strip characters. The stage was now set for the introduction of drama (both radio- and otherwise) in the comics, and more sophisticated characters and stories with sustained plot and action began to appear.

It was one of the many moments when trends in the comics reflected events in society. The interwarling, fun-loving twenties slammed into the beginning of the hard-back thirties with the stock market plunge on October 29, 1929. Hard times called for sterner heroes. Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy* was the right man for the early 1930s, when organized crime was gaining a foothold, and newspapers reported regularly on gangland murders. (Not surprisingly, he debuted in Chicago, where mob strife was particularly bloody.) America still loved to laugh at humorous characters in *Gasoline Alley*, but the adventures of pair *Lyle Gophus Asair* and her wealthy guardian, arms manufacturer and war profiteer *Daddy Warbucks*, became increasingly grim in a country where the disparity between legions of unemployed men and women and the privileged few took on distinctly Dickensian overtones. In these grim days a salesman at Eastern Color Printing Company in New York noted the success of the newspaper comic strips and had an idea about how to capitalize on them.

Dick Tracy decided to become a cop after gawping breathily at his fiancée's father. His murder was the first contemporary urban homicide in the comics.



The Birth of the Comic Book

Max Gaines is rightly credited as the Father of the Comic Book. Max had struggled through the twenties and early thirties and failed to make a living at a variety of schemes. He'd been an elementary school principal, numbers factory worker, and haberdasher before finding work as a salesman for Eastern Color Printing. Because

finances were tight, he and his family (consisting of his wife, Jessie, and his two children, Elaine and Bill) were living with Max's mother in the Bronx when Max found inspiration in a stack of old Sunday funnies in her attic. In 1933, the heart of the Depression, Max caught himself laughing at the old strips over again. Other people might laugh at them too, he reasoned; the trick was to figure out how to make it pay off.

Eastern's main asset was a state-of-the-art color printing press, and it was here that the Sunday funnies were printed for many of the major newspapers along the East Coast. Eastern's presses, which were set up for a standard newspaper page, were the determining factor in establishing the size of the contemporary comic book. Max and Eastern sales manager Harry Wildenberg realized that the standard page, folded twice (folded once it became tabloid size), made a handy size for a book or booklet (about the size of a piece of business stationery). One page of newspaper yielded eight pages; two made a sixteen-page pamphlet, four produced a respectable-size booklet of thirty-two pages.

In one of the earliest financially remunerative examples of recycling, Max Gaines literally created a market that did not exist before.

Calling them *Funnies on Parade*, he published the forty-two-page reprinted comics as giveaway premiums to boost the sales of consumer products such as Canada Dry ginger ale and Wheatons breakfast cereal. Manufacturers were pleased as customers by the hundreds of thousands clipped coupons and sent away for the comics. Within Eastern Color Printing, Max became the man to see about premium comic books.



After Eastern paid a syndicate \$10 per page to reprint newspaper comic strips, Max Gaines contacted Procter & Gamble to order a million copies of the first *Funnies on Parade*. However, the soap company made no long-term publication commitment.

Famous Funnies

A carnival of 24 comics



FAMOUS FUNNIES

100 COPIES with GAMES • PICTURE BOOKS



FAMOUS FUNNIES

100 COPIES with GAMES • PICTURE BOOKS



Eastern continued to put out Famous Funnies for twenty-two years, concluding with issue #258 in 1955. First published in 1926, Dell's Popular Comics ran through 1968.

At this point, comic books were merely an inducement to buy something else. In effect they were no different from the prize in the Cracker-Jacks box. However, they were so successful that Max came to believe comics had a value in their own right.

The time had come to float a trial balloon. Ever the salesman, Max convinced George Delacorte of Dell Publishing to finance a print run of 25,000 copies. He priced his half-titled-one sixty-four-page comic books at 10 cents a copy, called them Famous Funnies, and test-marketed a batch at local mom and pop groceries near his home. Much to Max's delight, they sold out over a weekend. Delacorte remained unconvinced that the phenomenon could be repeated and abandoned support of Famous Funnies. Gaines then talked Eastern into publishing directly and ordered up a larger print run of 250,000.

The circulation of Max Gaines' Famous Funnies increased with each issue until sales approached a million copies a month.

Following the success of Famous Funnies, Eastern expressed its gratitude by firing Max. Gaines hired on with McClure Syndicate, which had a brace of two-color presses acquired from a failed newspaper. Max hitched them together to get four-color capability and picked up where he left off. He rekindled his relationship with Dell and founded Popular Comics, which premiered the comic book appearances of Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, Terry & the Pirates, and Gasoline Alley.

The comic book was born.



The Beginning of the Golden Age

In an effort to keep the McClure presses fully engaged, Max was also printing *Detective Comics* for his friend, pulp publisher Harry Donenfeld. In 1937, Gaines was approached by two young cartoonists, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, with a strip they'd been trying to peddle for four years without success. Thinking that a might interest Harry, Gaines showed him a strip featuring a square-jawed man with one early kerebuck. Clad in garish modernism (bright blue union suit, red trunks) and red cape, he was endowed with extraordinary physical powers.

Even though Donenfeld had his doubts about the appeal (and credibility) of the character, he published the new strip as one of his *Detective Comics* issue #1 hit the streets in June of 1938, starring Siegel and Shuster's



A rejection letter received by Siegel and Shuster said, "We feel that the public have had their fill of super-human subjects." A very fine *Action Comics* #1 (left), the first appearance of Superman, sold for \$50,000 in 1991. A mint copy recently sold for \$187,500.



hero, *Superman*. It was an immediate runaway hit, and *Superman* became comic's first superstar. He is also the most durable: Having spawned radio and television shows, four major motion pictures, cartoons, a Broadway musical, and a pantheon of imitations.

Superman remains the single most important character in comic book history.

Donenfeld kept *Superman* within the DC fold, but joined in partnership with Gaines to produce the affiliated *All-American* line of comics, whose heroes included *The Flash*, *Hulk Hogan*, and *Green Lantern*. In what was to become a tradition among superheroes, within a couple of issues they banded together to form *The Justice Society of America*.

The appearance of *Superman* was the dawn of what has become known as the Golden Age of comic books. During that era, victory of the superheroes over the forces of evil was never in doubt. Increasingly in the late thirties and early forties, the specific identity of those forces of evil was implied, if not stated. Even before war against Germany was



lectured, the super-heroes had gone on the offensive against sinister but unnamed enemies. After Pearl Harbor, the sinister gods featured their swastikas, and the Nazis provided Superman and the other heroes with a newer casting of villains to vanquish. (Social historians have made much of the fact that Siegel and Shuster borrowed the Nietzschean concept of the Übermensch, or superman, and turned it against the Germans who claimed to be the inheritors of Friedrich Nietzsche's legacy. Indeed, it is said that an aide Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, once brought a message in the Reichstag to a screeching high over the rooster. Gesticulating with an Aton Cross, he supposedly then vehemently revealed Superman as a Jew.)



Because Superman always made a point of defending the underdog, Hitler and Stalin, with their goals of world domination, were tailor made as villains.

Wonder Woman was added to the All-American lineup in 1942. A strong, self-sufficient female character, she was the creation of Harvard psychologist William Moulton Marston. Mar had brought him in to develop a hero that appealed to female readership and who would be a positive role model for children. (Marston was also the inventor of the systolic blood pressure deception test, aka the lie detector.) Everyone was astonished when Marston's hero turned out to be a heroine, but Wonder Woman is another manifestation that currents in society are reflected in the comics.



This fall 1942 cover shows Princess Diana, aka Diana Prince or Wonder Woman, leading Mars, the Roman god of war, head over heels. William Moulton Marston, Wonder Woman's creator, personally selected Mars as her adversary.

This superwoman who could hold her own with the superguys came along at the same time that Rosie the Riveter took her place on the assembly line as the men went to war.

Wonder Woman's mother, the Queen of the Amazons, sent her daughter off to fight for "America, the last citadel of democracy, land of equal rights for women," as a stark left, but Diana returned the stark for a pair of shorts.



Despite paper shortages, the war was good for Gaines and Dorfenthal. By 1943, they were publishing twenty titles that accounted for one-third of the 25 million comics being sold in America every month.

The uneasy relationship between Max and Harry soured when Harry unilaterally gave half of his half of the business to his accountant, Jack Liebowitz. Max was not consulted, perhaps because Liebowitz and Gaines had rubbed each other the wrong way for years. Max disdained Liebowitz as a bean counter and believed he was determined to wring the last penny from the bottom line in the comic book ventures. Gaines was particularly agitated by Liebowitz's insistence on increasing the number of advertisements in the comic books. Scrumbling matches among the partners became increasingly frequent until

early in 1943, when Max asked for and got \$200,000 from Jack and Harry for his interest in *Action Comics*. Part of what made Jack and Harry meet Gaines asking peace was that Max held the paper contracts—and since newspaper was still a controlled substance due to wartime shortages, Jack and Harry were very much tied to Max until he released them. (Shortly thereafter, of course, the war ended and the paper shortage ended—from that perspective, at least, Max had maximized his opportuni-

ty.) In accepting the buyout, Gaines surrendered his rights to *The Flash*, *Wonder Woman*, *The Green Lantern*, and the other All-American action heroes and announced his retirement.

"Retirement" lasted two weeks, after which Max founded *Falschbaum's Comics*, publishing the more sedate titles that Dorfenthal and Liebowitz had ceded to him.



Above, The original partners in *Action Comics* (left to right): Jack Liebowitz, Harry Dorfenthal, an unidentified associate, and Max Gaines.

At right, Max Gaines poses at the helm of his *Educational Comics* empire, with a selection of titles behind him.



THE GRISLY CREATIVITY OF WILLIAM GAINES

The Infant Terrible

Born in 1922, Bill Gaines hated comics when he was growing up. He was a klutzy, rebellious kid who couldn't seem to do anything right, and his father Max didn't miss many opportunities to tell him so. The elder Gaines was convinced his kid had been dredged from the bottom of the family gene pool, and was destined to be a failure. For his part, Bill did his best to live down to his father's expectations.

Max was a strong, old-fashioned father in the Prussian tradition, who felt that his job was to mold his children and instill discipline, not to show affection. He was also a swimmer at heart, and none other than not the target of his high-decibel ire was his son. Perhaps as a defense mechanism, young Bill developed a proclivity for practical jokes and a peculiar literal-mindedness that drove his father bananas (as it was no doubt calculated to do). If Max sternly admonished him to "drop whatever you're doing," to give him a hand, Bill complied to the letter with his father's directive—and let the pile of books or cup of coffee slip from his fingers before presenting himself on the double before the family commander-in-chief. "I was always a hounding lion around my father," Gaines confessed to Frank Jacobs in *The Mad World of William M. Gaines*. "I don't know whether it was because I knew it would drive him out of his mind, which it did, or because he saved me into being a hounding lion."

After high school he enrolled in Brooklyn Poly but was expelled in his junior year because of his poor grades and his reckless nonstop drinking with slide rules, drink and crabs (but



As Max prospered, he moved the family to a comfortable house in Brooklyn. Eventually he bought a more elegant home in White Plains and a summer house on Lake Placid. Bill, shown above with his father Max and below with his mother Jesse and his sister Elaine, spent his childhood summers on the lake.

des). To hide his disgust from Max, he continued to leave the house each morning as if going to school. Finally, despite his asthma and poor eyesight, he was drafted. At this stage in his life, the younger Gaines was a wild dabbler, rather nerdy young man. He dived into it at all throughout high school. Because he lacked much in the way of swim time with the ladies, in 1944 his mother Jesse all but arranged his marriage to his first half-way serious romantic, his second cousin, Hazel Loub.

After an uneventful stint as a photographer in the Army Air Corps, Bill decided that he wanted to teach high school chemistry. He certainly had no desire to join the family business and work under his father's thumb on a daily basis. After his discharge from the army, Bill enrolled in NYU and was within a few months of earning his teaching credential in 1947 when his marriage unraveled. To combat his downcast wife, Max took her and some family friends, Sam and Helen Irwin and their son Billy, to their vacation home on Lake Placid. Sam and Billy Irwin were with Max in the Gaines family boat when the front of the boat was rammed by another speeding vessel. Max and Sam were killed instantly, ten-year-old Billy survived. Billy Irwin's account of the accident suggests that Max Gaines died a hero. As the other boat bore down on them and the crash became inevitable at the last possible moment, Max picked up Billy and three boys from the front of the boat to the rear, saving his life.

The Court Jester Becomes King

At Jessie's behest, young Bill, just twenty-five and newly divorced, reluctantly took over K&C comics, his father's publishing business. At first, he went into the office about once a week, primarily to sign checks and to humor his widowed mother. He believed his presence at the company was temporary, and among some of Max's veteran staff there was the disfigured hope that this would indeed

come. Perhaps it was a holdover from Max's days as an elementary school principal, but he never gave up on the potential for comic books as a teaching tool. (His use of the psychology William Moulton Marston to create *Wonder Woman* was perhaps an earlier effort in the same vein.) When he came back from his two-week "retirement," he set about trying to demonstrate this theory on the newsstands of America.

It wasn't working. His FC or Educational Comics were far more popular with parents than with children. Max Gaines had deliberately stayed away from the most popular comic trends of the postwar era—and the market was punishing him for it. At a time when kids were plunking down their dimes in record numbers for westerns, romances, and crime comics, EC put out atrocious publications like *Picture Stories from the Bible*, *Picture Stories from American History*, *Gay '64 Comics*, and *Animal Bible*. There was nothing inherently wrong with *Animal Bible*, funny animal comics led by Dell's *Louie, Louie* and *Merry Melodys*, with *Hugs Bunny*, *Elder Beird*, *Daffy Duck* and *Porky Pig*, as well as Disney's *Donald Duck* and *Mickey Mouse* held strong appeal throughout the late fifties and early sixties as the vanguard of the Baby Boomer learned to read. However, with sterile and even downright naive offerings like *Brown's Bambi in the Forest*, it was

Bill inherited a mess of titles competing with each other to lose the most money.



be the case. (As a teen, Bill had made a few forays into his father's office during school vacations, and had displayed an unimpeachable penchant for getting in the way, or worse, into trouble!) In the first few months following his father's passing, it was not unusual to find him sitting at his father's desk, playing gin rummy with his cousin for hours on end.

Bill may have had no prior experience running a company, but it didn't take a CPA to see that the business was failing. When Max Gaines was bought out by Harry Donerfeld and Jack Liebowitz, all rights to the superheroes remained with *Atlas*

In 1945, Max Gaines distributed over \$5,000 worth of proceeds from sales of *Picture Stories from the Bible* to various religious organizations. One of the recipients was Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, then pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church of New York.



surprising that FC Comics was hemorrhaging red ink. When Max Gaines died, in August 1947, it was \$100,000 in the hole.

Bill Gaines probably would have been an excellent chemistry teacher (the kind who would blow things up just to see what would happen, or make hydrogen sulfide just before an inspection visit by the school board), but he never in a Billion burned again. With the shadow of his overbearing father suddenly absent, Bill fell head over heels in love with Max's medium, if not his message. "First thing I knew, I had to read comics. Next thing I knew, I was in love with them," he said simply.

By his own description, Bill inherited "a mess of titles competing with each other in love and most money. As he slowly grew more familiar with the business, he wanted to make changes, both to improve the fiscal health of the company and to marry the comics closer in line with his own interests. At first, he took the lead from other publishers, putting out imitations of other successful comics.

Bill Cohen had been Max Gaines's circulation manager and, with business manager Frank Lee, he was keeping a eye on EC while Bill got up on speed with the business. Cohen got word to a young cartoonist working at Fox Features Syndicate that Bill was interested in putting out a teen comic, something in the vein of the popular *Archie* series.

The artist came in with his portfolio. Gaines was particularly attracted to the artist's ability to render voluptuous young ladies, and put him under contract to do a teenage comic book called *Goog Swoosh with Peggy*. The artist's name was Al Feldbaum—and the rest, as they say, is history.

In March of 48, Feldbaum went right to work on *Peggy*. He got as far as writing the first stories and peering in the drawing when Gaines called him into his office. With his finger held low he told Feldbaum that he wasn't going to publish *Goog Swoosh with Peggy*. In 1948, publishing practices in the comic book industry resembled nothing so much as a game of "follow the leader"—played by a colony of sexual lemmings. With the hiring of seaside rationing on paper, there was an explosion of comic book titles, all vying for the attention of schoolchildren, teens, and young adults.



Bill Cohen never thought he could fill his father's shoes. When his mother insisted he take his father's place at the office, he complained, "If he was having money, what do you expect me to do?"



*Hello, creeps!
Here's a patrid
peek at what's
ahead after you've
done being gored
stiff with pre-
Crypt tedium,
heh, heh, heh.*



The market was glutted, as comics fought for space in drugstores and newsstands. The first comic to break new ground was almost immediately followed by a tidal wave of comic clones, but the original usually held an edge it never relinquished. In the wake of an innovation, new knockoff titles came and went with dizzying speed, sometimes lasting just a couple of issues—or less. Before *Gang Buggy* ever left Feldstein's drawing board, the entire teenage comic market collapsed from oversaturation. Almost everything except *Archie* was dying on the shelves.

Feldstein was then just twenty-two, but was not entirely surprised when Gaines told

him *Buggy* was dead. "Even when I was still at Fox, he'd seen the teen trend begin to wane. Still it was not good news. 'I had a child and was living in a three-room apartment in Brooklyn. I had to make a living and I was desperate,'" he remembers. He had nothing to lose by taking his best shot with EC: "Okay, you up the contract," he told a relieved Gaines. "I'll come to work for you and help you develop some more marketable titles." Keeping Al Feldstein was Bill Gaines' first major independent business decision as the head of EC Comics. Together they began a metamorphosis of the EC line, taking a hard look at what other publishers were offering and jettisoning the bland, wholesale comic books championed by Bill's father.



For obvious reasons, comics featuring well-endowed young women were known within the industry as "headlight" comics.



Al Feldstein's penchant for bad puns, which found full expression in the *Crypt Keepers*, can be seen in the title of the only surviving pencil rendering in the EC archives, "Lashes to Lashes."

Teenage Comics: A Boom Goes Bust

It all started with *Archie*, who was spawned in December 1941 (about the same time as Pearl Harbor). Created by Bob Montana, he got his own magazine in February of 1943, and his antics with pals Betty, Veronica, and Jughead proved a relief to war-weary GIs scornfully out of high school themselves.

Archie had the teen market to himself for most of the Second World War. DC came out with its *Archie* wannabe, *Buzzy*, in 1944. Targeting the teenage-girl market, Marvel debuted *Tessie the Typist* in the same year. In 1945 they came out with *Mills the Model* and *Nellie the Nurse* (all three bosomy alternative females were created by Stan Spider-Man Lee), as well as *Patsy Walker*. *Archie*'s publishers countered

with *Katy Keene*. None of them ever matched the success of the original; *Archie* got his own radio program in 1945. His success ultimately prompted his publishing house, MLJ Magazines, to change its name in his honor.

In 1948, Al Feldstein was freelancing at Fox Features Syndicate, drawing and writing some teen comics called *Sunny—America's Sweetheart*, Junior, and doing a comic book adaptation of a popular radio show called *Meet Corliss Archer*. Sol Cohen reached Feldstein through the letterer who was working on Al's pencils and told him that EC was considering coming out with a teenage comic. Unhappy at Fox, he made an appointment to meet with Bill Gaines.

The youthful Bill Gaines and dapper Al Feldstein relax at an early EC office party in the days when they were about to become the hottest creative team in horror comics.



The Bill & Al Show

The new approach was heralded by a subtle but important name change—within a year, Bill made the “E” in EC comics stand for “Entertaining,” rather than “Educational.” After the war, crime comics, all of them the legitimate offspring of Lee Gilson’s *Crime Does Not Pay* (1942), were the most popular, but westerns and romances were also selling well. Trying to grab a piece of the current trend, Bill changed the name of *International Comics* to *International Crime Patrol*, rechristened the hapless *Happy Hashbrowns* as *Saddle Justice*, and put Al to work illustrating crime and western stories. So that Feldheim’s talent for drawing humor becomes didn’t go to waste, they also started a romance comic called *Modern Love*. Al found himself working side-by-side with another artist whom Gaines had hired early in his tenure as head of EC, Graham Ingeb.

Feldheim began illustrating scripts that Gaines had commissioned, but soon complained about their quality. “Look,” he grouched to Bill, “I can do better than this.” Feldheim had been writing and editing for Fox’s teenage series before coming to EC, so Gaines greenlighted him to write his own crime and western stories.

With the new comic books, EC had become more competitive, but it was a long way from making a profit. Gaines and Feldheim were cautiously feeling their way, changing the names of the new comics in response to the shifts they perceived in the marketplace. *Saddle Justice* lasted just six issues before becoming *Saddle Romance*. After eight issues, *Modern Love* segued into *A Moon, A Girl, A Romance*. EC wasn’t the only comic publisher doing the name-change number: Fox Features Syndicate’s *Western Kid*s suddenly mutated into *My True Love*, Marvel’s *Clash* grew hair on her chest and was reborn as *Crime Girl*’s *Hit*, Foxcott’s *Captain Midnight* got an attitude adjustment and reemerged as *Southwest*. There’s only one American institution that could raise such an out-break of *blax*x



In the 1950s, kids gathered around the copyist as to listen to radio thrillers as much the same way as they huddled around the television today.

Brothers’ silliness—the U.S. Post Office.

Working closely together, Al and Bill handled almost immediately, both in the office and outside it. The two shared meals and confidences, and indulged their mad passion for roller derby and the Brooklyn Dodgers together. They shared alien eggs in “delicious,” “Amp,” and “Chuck,” composing replies to the lovelorn when EC’s spurned replicas of *Dear Abby* began running in the romance titles. This was more than ironic since Feldheim was having marital troubles at the time and the shy, divorced Gaines was living an all-but-solitary life with his mother in Brooklyn.

Gaines gave Feldheim a lift home every night on the way to his mother’s house. It was during one of these rides that Al began to noodle on why EC wasn’t doing better. “You know, Bill,” he began, “we’re really fools for following the crowd. Crime comics—westerns—romances... This is an industry where even shady fellows and very few take the lead... But it’s the guys who are the innovators who really prevail. All the imitators lag eventually.”

Gaines and Feldheim discovered that among the common interests they shared was a love of spine-tingling tales of night radio thrillers, when larvae gathered ‘round the crystal set the way they now congregate in front of the tube. Three years younger than Gaines, Feldheim had been too idle to be permitted to listen in, but he crept out of bed and perched on the top of the stairs while his older brother slivered along with *Amor Simoes* and Arch Oboler’s *Light On*, especially “The Old Witch’s Tale.” “I talked to Bill about the old horror stories and how much we’d loved them,” recalls Feldheim. I said, ‘Why don’t we put this stuff in the comics?’”

Comics were shipped second class and required a \$2,000 permit for each new title. To avoid the fee, publishers sent new titles out on existing permits. If they stuck up on the name change, usually they got away with it. It wasn’t until Gaines tried to metamorphose *A Moon, A Girl... Romance* into *Modern Love* that the Post Office caught him.



The Descent into the Crypt



In addition to providing the debut of the Crypt Keeper, "Return from the Grave" in *Crime Patrol* #13 marks the first in a long parade of Gaines/Feldman corpses who come back from the dead. Ambulatory cadavers were one of the most popular and enduring EC house plots.



Gaines thought he was onto something, and soon Al was helping Bill take Max's legacy in a direction his father had never dreamed of—horror. They dropped early hints of their intentions into the non-horror titles *Crime Patrol* and *War Against Crime*, both to test the market and to establish a transition that avoided payment of the second-class mailing permit fee.

Gaines was enamored of the new material, and even more delighted when he learned how well it was selling.

EC's distributors employed "road men" who functioned a bit like a Nielsen rating service for comic books. Road men hit the newsstands and went into the moon and pop stores to make sure their comics were properly displayed. They also counted how many magazines were still on the racks. One good barometer of how well a comic was doing was the "ten-day checkup." After ten days on the stands, the road men counted how

many were left. If only ten of the original fifty copies had been sold, the magazine was selling at twenty percent and that comic was a dog. If forty of the fifty were gone, the comic was selling at eighty percent and was a big hit. Bill Gaines had not inherited much of his father's personality, but he did inherit some of Max's business acumen. When the ten-day checkups of the revamped *Crime Patrol* with horror started showing vast improvement over previous sales, Bill perceived his advantage.

One feature that had appealed to Feldman about the old radio thrillers was the presence of a host—a ghoulish ancestor of Alastair Cooke of *Masterpiece Theatre*. Al told Bill that he wanted to have a continuing character to present his scary stories, which is how the Crypt Keeper was born. He made his debut in *Crime Patrol* #15 in a story called "Return from the Grave," and returned for a curtain call in *Crime Patrol* #16 in "The Specter in the Castle."

The Crypt Keeper was a bona fide personality from the very beginning. He was

HERE IS ANOTHER TALE TAKEN FROM
THE CRYPT OF TERROR



also a wisecracking snarler. Feldman developed him as a sort of sarcastic color commentator on the gleeful goings-on, and used him to highlight the fact that EC horror, however grisly it became, was always written with tongue firmly planted in cheek.

At about the same time, Feldman's eight-page story "Buried Alive" appeared in Issue #10 of *War Against Crime*. This tale was hosted by the Vault Keeper, and marked his first appearance in print. The Vault Keeper, like the Crypt Keeper, commented on the stories from a vantage point outside the proceedings. In the same issue was a Johnny Craig story called "The Idol's Revenge." In the following issue, *War Against Crime* #11, Feldman brought the Vault Keeper back to preside over a story entitled "The Murky's Curse."

As it turned out, *Crime Patrol* #16 and *War Against Crime* #11 were the twilight of the old order. With Issue #17 and Issue #12, the Crypt Keeper and the Vault Keeper each got his own show, as it were, and the titles of their comics were changed to *The Crypt of Terror* and *The Vault of Horror*. Gaines and Feldman

THE VAULT OF HORROR!





made the switch in January of 1950, premiering the new titles with the April/May issues. They also added a companion title, *The Abode of Fear* (hosted by the Old Witch, another Feldheim character), with Gaines' announcement of the debut of his *New Blood* in comics, he left other publishers scrambling to respond to his innovation.

The first leap into the Crypt from *Factor Stories from the Bible* was a big match for Sol Cohen, Max's former circulation manager, who went to Avon Comics. Rather than hire someone to replace him, Gaines and Feldheim assumed command of EC.

The first issues of EC's three horror titles all appeared in 1950. The title *The Crypt of Fear* was used on issues #12, 18, and 19. With issue #20 (Dec. 1950), the title was changed to *Tales from the Crypt*, but it was not until issue #22 (Feb. 1951) that the now famous trademark logo appeared.



Now that those idiots are done with all this deadly history, we finally get to me! Here comes the real meat of the story. Heh, heh, heh.



HORROR



NO. 17
APR - MAY

THE CRYPT OF

Edited



10¢

TERROR

INTRODUCING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES...

**ILLUSTRATED
SUSPENSE STORIES**
WE DARE YOU TO READ!



EC SPLATTERS AMERICA WITH

With their horror tales, Feldstein and Gaines struck a nerve deep in the national psyche.



On September 3, 1945, the Soviet Union exploded its first A-bomb, ending the U.S. atomic monopoly and raising the specter of global nuclear war. Kids were ducking under desks in school rooms all over America in preparation for the seemingly inevitable mushroom cloud.

Atop the Bone Pile

Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Phantom of the Opera had sprung from the nightmare conditions of the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Horror corners of the 1950s appeared to teens and young adults who were trying to cope with the aftermath of even greater terrors—Nazi death camps and the explosion of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Fifties kids came of age in a booming, button-down America derring-do era punctuated by outbreaks of national paranoia. School duck-and-cover drills accompanied the fear that at any moment a nuclear attack could send us into shockwaves for an ill-fated year or years. As high school graduates were getting shipped off to Korea, the McCarthy hearings and the Rosenberg spy trial reinforced the idea that America's enemies were everywhere—without constant vigilance we would be destroyed from within. For the good of the country it was necessary to ferret out the wackos. Communists who had emasculated themselves as red-blooded patriots and infiltrated the high school faculty.

It was difficult for adolescents to deal with these deep water fears for survival, national or otherwise, when everything looked so easy at home. Times were good, the factories were humming. With the advent of Levittown, everyone could safely aspire to be Gene and Harriet Millham of young America, who had no frame of reference to judge how far the times were out of joint, were whipsawed by the dichotomy between moral terror and creature comforts. Cultural historian David J. Skal states the case vividly in *The Monster Show*:

The new American playground of the early 1950s was even steeper than the pile of human misery World War II had churned till lives of over 40 million soldiers and civilians, and had introduced two radical new forms of sophisticated death—the atomic bomb and the extermination camp—that seriously challenged the mind's ability to absorb, much less cope with, the total awe of horror at war-continuity. If America in 1950 was filled with the smell of new cars, it was still permeated by the stench of mass death, and the threat of more to come.

Feldstein called his rendition of the Crypt Keeper a "painted old creature...with puppets and hair growing out of his nose."



AN EXPLOSION OF HORROR



The Time of His Life

Bill Gaines was not looking for the underlying reasons why his horror comics were taking off in the marketplace. Perhaps for the first time in his life, he was simply puzzled about what he was doing. He had made the creative decision to pioneer a new genre that appealed to him personally. Now in 1950 he was putting out comics that he wanted to read, and his innovation was being handsomely rewarded. Although they didn't match DC or Marvel in overall sales volume,

New Trend comics began to outsell almost everything else

on a percentage basis, and Gaines started whittling down the debt he'd inherited from his father



Appropriately dubbed "splash pages" in the jargon of the comic book industry, the opening spreads of these early stories grabbed the reader with rapidly dramatic images.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!



Al Feldstein was the key ingredient from the beginning.

Like one of EC's own stories where one person is trapped inside the body of another, Gaines rapidly discovered that within the body of his friend the artist beat the heart of a writer—and a pretty terrific writer at that. Although a few other writers had been involved early on in the horror magazines, it was apparent to both that Feldstein's stuff was superior and he quickly persuaded the rest

Horror Haikus

Building on their friendship, the two men developed a close working relationship that was responsible for most of the EC horror story lines. Feldstein was the engine, Gaines was the spark plug, Desodine was the unobtrusive analyst. In a cycle that no doubt fed on itself (as it were), the perpetually Bush-shaped Gaines, a huge eater, was constantly dieting. He took an appetite suppressant as part of this effort, and the appetite suppressant of choice at that time was a form of speed called



Frederick. It was also used by many agents (both then and later) to help them stay awake and crain for exams. Games' use of the drug was not uncommon, nor was it considered substance abuse; it was liberally prescribed by doctors who were entirely oblivious to its known effect about as safe sleep. Because the Doc would keep fill up a night, he read—and what he read was fiction stories. It was enough to give the phrase “speed reading” a whole new connotation. “I read like a maniac,” recalled Games in a 1985 *Game Journal* interview. “I would read every science fiction and horror story I could get my hands on. They couldn’t publish them fast enough.”

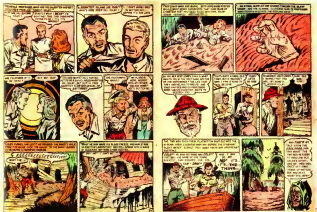
Bill would remain in the office in the morning with the germ of an idea for a story—or rather, several germs for several stories—pulled from his night’s reading. Games walked his ideas’ springboards, the basic outlines of a plot from which Felblum could take off and write the comic to be safe. Often these springboards were no more than a small slip of paper containing a heavily scabbled hand note in sentence fragments—little boxes or blocks that Felblum could flesh out into complex stories.

Games’ biggest hurdle in the morning was to sell Felblum a springboard. In his 1971 biography (written by *AD* staffer Frank Jacobs), Games recalled, with slight exaggeration, how the springboard pitch process worked. “After Al had rejected the first three stories on general principles, he might show a little interest in Number 34. Then I’d give him the lead sell. He’d normally write a story in three hours, but during those three hours I’d have a nervous stomach, wondering if Al was going to come in screaming, ‘I can’t write that goddam plot!’”

Games kept and revised his little paper springboards. Often what Felblum (didn’t buy) from Games on one morning he brought the next day—in the next week. Sometimes Games was able to add a new twist that made a rejected idea more salable. Sometimes they were writing for a different artist whose style was more suited to the material. And sometimes they were just more desperate.

“Since Al had to write the story quickly, he was a rough audience. I used to drive him nuts because we would plot these together and I would say, ‘No, no, no. Bill, that just doesn’t work,’” recalled Felblum.

“Error in the Swamp” began with a guest appearance by the Old Witch in the Youth Keeper’s magazine (*Book of Horror #13*). This is a 1954 “first generation” Old Witch, drawn by Al Feldstein. “Ghostly” Graham Angels had not yet made his his own. Even after he no longer drew them for their stories, Feldstein versions of the Crypt Keeper, Vault Keeper, and Old Witch remained on the covers until 1965.



HE WAS TRYING TO KILL ME? HE HATED ME? AND THEN, ONE NIGHT HE ALMOST SUCCEEDED... THE NIGHT I WOUL...

TERROR TRAIN



This Feldstein story from the first issue of *Hulk of Horror* (#12, Apr/May 1994) is unusual because it is not introduced by any of the Circulonatics.

"The truth was that Bill was just anxious to get to lunch." Gaines' line of food was legendary, and the legend (as well as Bill's girth) grew over time. Hunger was about the worst thing that could happen to a person, and heaven forbid FC's head waiter should have to work on an empty stomach.

"We'd plot in the morning," Feldstein remembers, "then go to Patrow's, the local Italian restaurant. We'd gorge ourselves on spaghetti and minestrone and bread. I got fat in a very short time. I ballooned from 150 to 180 pounds." Rather than follow Gaines on the Deschaine diet plan (which M could plainly see was not working), Feldstein began passing up Patrow's, opting instead for melba toast and crêpes, then so at the drawing board.

His chase may have had as much to do with deadlines as with dining. The artist couldn't work without the story, and he was keeping the entire staff busy, virtually single-handedly. Having determined with Gaines not just the plot but whether the story would take up six, seven, or eight pages, Feldstein then got right to a after lunch.

"I would go into the back room and write the stories directly onto the illustration board," recalls Feldstein.

"I knew what the layout and the timing of the story were going to be. This came naturally to me, and I was amazed because I was an artist, I was never a writer. I started writing two lines below the top of the panel to give our letterer space to work in. He could letter in the caption and at the same time still be able to read the rest of what I'd written. When he was finished, he would erase out my hand lettering. It disappeared, and all that remained was the lettered panels. There are no existing original scripts of anything I wrote."

The idea of a convict escaping from prison hidden in a coffin that becomes his tomb reoccurs in "The Substrate" (Tales from the Crypt #45).

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!





A Killing Pace

By day's end, Feltstein's story was complete, and his convergence with the finished draft was a special time in the office. Because much of the plot was conveyed through dialogue, Feltstein's notes were almost little mini-dramas, like the old radio thrillers. When Al had set down his tale panel by panel, he brought it to Bill, who'd give a dramatic reading of it to whoever was around, often cackling gleefully as he did so. "This was the fun part," Gates told Maria Rodellbach at *Captivity: A History of the Love Book and Magazine*. "We always thought of our work as being theatrical, and it had to read right." The next day the two started all over on another story.

Al and Bill were lightening-quickly prolific. The *EC* production schedule was grueling, and Feltstein in particular kept up a pace that was absolutely aerobic—in hindsight it's astonishing that Gates, not Feltstein, was the one on stimulants. At maximum output in 1953, Al was writing five stories a week—and editing seven magazines—*Tales from the Crypt*, *House of Fear*, *Crime Suspense Stories*, *Shock Suspense Stories*, *Weird Science*, and *Weird Fantasy*.

Johnny Craig wrote and drew the Vault Suspense story that led to the title of volume that Feltstein wrote the other three stories in the magazine, and prepared the Vault Suspense dialogue.





It Came from Outer Space

Creators tried hard to boost EC's science-fiction comics, enlisting the successful hosts of his horror magazines to promote them.

If *Tales from the Crypt*, *House of Horrors*, and *House of Mystery* were Gaines' successful offspring who became, in the words of one, "Lover, and business partner, *Blind Nuts* and *Blind Justice*, were his two favorite sons who grew up to be excellent but irascible professors. They were introduced in May of 1950, a loss in the hearts of the horror magazines, and any other publisher besides Gaines would have killed them off after a couple of issues. They never got created anything like the revenues of other EC titles, and by 1963 they were barely paying for themselves, let alone making money.

The *Ess* of *Blind Nuts* and *Blind Justice* may not have been legion, but they were devoted Gaines and

Feldman enthusiasts set out to cultivate them in the same manner that they established a personal relationship with their *Blind* fans. What the science fiction critic looked for, however, was a hard character. (With benefits of hindsight, some have speculated that *Blind Nuts* and *Blind Justice* would have been more commercially successful if they'd featured sci-fi interpretations of the *Crypt* Kaper.)

Perhaps in response to the impending threat of nuclear war, readers were expected a preference for the "ultimate catastrophe story"—Feldman's "Destruction of the Earth" was an early favorite. Not surprising, then, other Gaines were taken of alien beings from outer space—the early 1950s were the heyday of reports of flying saucers—and stories of extraterrestrial invaders (both benign and deadly) were popular fodder not just in comic books, but in movies as well, including *Invasion from Mars* (1953) and most notably Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951).

Working with Gaines springboards, Feldman wrote *Blind Nuts* and *Blind*



Artist, just like he wrote the stories for horror covers. Even after his writing and editing duties mounted and he no longer had time to draw his own stories, Feldstein struggled to make time to keep doing cover art. All epochs of doing covers—it was virtually the only opportunity he had to draw. For his part, Gaines was delighted to oblige his artists, always—the sales data showed that issues with Feldstein covers, whether they were horror

or science fiction, generally outsold those without other artists' work on the cover.

Science fiction was Gaines' passion before it was Feldstein's, but he too became enamored of it. Each of the horror magazines trumpeted, "EC is proud to offer two science fiction comics," and Gaines and Feldstein kept producing them because they loved them, even if the customers did not.



Ray Bradbury & EC

"The first Buck Rogers comic strip I saw in 1929 changed my life forever," says distinguished science-fiction author and futurist Ray Bradbury. "Because he was going into the future and I wanted to go there." With works such as *The Martian Chronicles*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *The Illustrated Man*, Bradbury's writings took him—and all of us—into the future, and into the cozy recesses of fantasy. They also took him into the pages of EC comics.

Born in Waukegan, Illinois, in 1920, Bradbury began writing as an adolescent, penning his own snippets to the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs on a toy typewriter. By age fifteen, he was submitting his works to magazines, and he collected six years of rejection slips before his works began selling to the pulp magazines in the early 1940s. Quickly thereafter, however, they began appearing in magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Collier's*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

What began as an exchange of letters with Bill Gaines over EC's "borrowing" of "The Emisary" (which appeared uncredited as "What the Dog Dragged In" in *Vault of Horror* #23) blossomed into an affection between Bradbury and Bradbury fans Gaines and Feldstein, and many of Bradbury's stories were adapted by Feldstein into comic form.

"I thought the adaptations were very good," says Bradbury. "They were very accurate. They quoted from me directly: 'You can't ask for more than that.'"

Asked to explain our fascination with horror stories, Bradbury suggests: "As I was growing up, my friends and I all loved to be frightened. It's a rehearsal of death. We know it's out there, so you've got to practice ahead of time in order to make do with it."

EC's Ray Bradbury Adaptations

Cover Title	Comic/Issue#	Artist
"What the Dog Dragged In"	Vault of Horror #23	Jack Kamen
"Name is Gray"	Weird Fantasy #12	Wally Wood
"The Coffin"	House of Fear #16	Jack Davis
"There Was a Great Salt Room"	Weird Fantasy #17	Wally Wood
"The Long Year"	Weird Science #17	Joe Orlando
"Let a Play Perform"	Vault of Horror #28	Jack Davis
"There Was an Old Woman"	Strip from the Crypt #34	Orinson Eggle
"The Great Assassin"	Shock SuspenStories #7	George Evans
"The Screaming Woman"	Crime SuspenStories #18	Jack Kamen
"On a Hour"	Weird Fantasy #18	Wally Wood
"Man in Howl"	Weird Science #19	Wally Wood
"The Black Form"	House of Fear #19	Jack Davis
"King of the Grey Spaces"	Weird Fantasy #19	John Sewer/ Bill Elder
"The One Who Walks"	Weird Science #19	Al Williamson
"The Lulu"	Vault of Horror #31	Joe Orlando
"The Hunter"	Strip from the Crypt #36	Jack Kamen
"The Doctor Game"	Shock SuspenStories #9	Jack Kamen
"Touch and Go"	Crime SuspenStories #13	Johnny Craig
"A Riddle"	Weird Fantasy #22	Al Williamson
"Buyer's Prejudice"	Weird Science #22	Jack Kamen
"The Million Year Post"	Weird Fantasy #21	John Sewer/ Bill Elder
"Punishment without Crime"	Weird Science #21	Jack Kamen
"The Saint Torso"	Weird Fantasy #22	Reed Crandall
"Outcasts of the Stars"	Weird Science #22	Joe Orlando
"The Flying Machine"	Weird Science-Fantasy #22	Denise Kingdon
"A Board of Thunder"	Weird Science-Fantasy #22	Al Williamson

Source: Ray Bradbury/Adaptation/Book Group



Jolts of Social Conscience in Comic Book Disguise

Crime SuspenseStories debuted in October 1950, Shock SuspenseStories followed in February of 1952. Both offered different kinds of "horror" stories, those that proved that some of the scariest stuff around wasn't necessarily from outer space or the mommy's tomb—sometimes it was born around the corner or down the streets. Often it was from city hall, as stories in these magazines often dealt with corruption of public officials. Gaines himself summarized how these magazines differed from his horror titles: "Shock SuspenseStories do not contain supernaturalism. We want shock readings to wind up plain, logical suspense stories. Crime SuspenseStories contain no shock. These are logical stories in which the villain tries to get away with murder—and probably does."

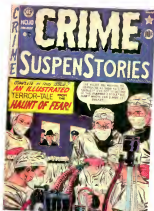
Neither of the SuspenseStories magazines featured a host. Instead, Shock SuspenseStories offered up a Whitman's Sampler approach each—often combining a crime story, a science fiction story, a horror story, and a shock story in the same issue. Some fans were disappointed by this type of smorgasbord (for example, those who liked horror but didn't care for science fiction), feeling they were guaranteed at least one or two "shock" in each issue.



Feldman's adaptations of Bradbury in the SuspenseStories include "Touch and Go," "The Small Assassin," "The Screaming Woman," and perhaps the best of all, "The October Game."



Feldman produced a comic book version of film noir in Crime SuspenseStories, as he cleverly worked in themes from James M. Cain, Cornell Woolridge, and Mickey Spillane.



YOU'LL BE JAWED BY THE STARTLING LINES
OF THIS SHOCKING NARRATIVE!

HATE!



THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO THE GOLDEN AGE
OF YOUR SHOCKING NARRATIVE!

the guilty!



THE MONKEY

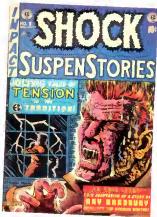


EC was fearless in its
presentation of sensitive
social issues, which—pro-
fitably—triggered more
criticism of the comics.

Increasingly Gaines and Feltman used these two venues to take on some of the most explosive issues of the day. They called them "Frontiers," and used *Shock* in particular to tackle themes such as racism ("The Lords," *Shock Suspense* #8, Feltman/Wood), drug addiction ("The Monkey," *Shock Suspense* #12, Feltman/Wood), and anti-Semitism ("Hate," *Shock Suspense* #5, Feltman/Wood). Not surprisingly, this discrimination resulted both in line work and public controversy.



Jack Kamen's murderous couple on the cover of #10 was more in the *Shock Suspense* tradition than Feltman's stunning image of a man scorch by lightning on the cover of #7, which is clearly in the horror tradition.



THE SCORCHING OF A MAN BY
RAY BRADBURY
REPRESENTS THE HORROR TRADITION

The Just Desserts Cookbook

A through Games and Feldman didn't target any particular segment of the population (other than themselves) with their stories, the local color of their characters was seen and young adult males. Others have speculated that perhaps Bill Gaines was himself a judge. Peter Pan, a personal professor out to shock adults, but the fact is many of the EC horror stories had a consistent, readily identifiable style that appealed to their adolescent and post-adolescent readership.

The more obvious comment that all was the more vivid of late in the mid-1950s, like the old days of the superheros, the good guys didn't always win the day in the EC comics—often there were no good guys, and if there were, their success was not guaranteed. Victor did not always triumph, but on the other hand, the bad guys usually got what was coming to them. In the tradition of Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, and G. Henry, Feldman's stories concluded with one grimy form of retribution on another, and one of the tanks of mounting story meeting between Al and Bill was to come up with the counterpoint to your

The grotesque recipes they concocted for just desserts gave the EC stories the resonance of little morality plays—demonstrations that what goes around, comes around—usually in some horrendously clever way almost always with fatal consequences.

"If somebody did something really bad," Gaines said, "he usually 'got it.' And of course the EC way was he got it the same way he gave it."

In "None But the Lonely Heart" (*Girls from the Crypt* #35, Dec. 30/Jan. '53, Feldman/Ingels), a gold-digging man (bearing a striking resemblance to Vincent Price) who has married and horripated off seven rich but ugly widows talks for the inevitable pleasure of an eighth, and his center is further enhanced by her description of her mansion. Planning to keep this one rather than kill her, he drives to her posh estate, only to discover that the hard-boiled and brutish firm she wrote about grace her coffin, which a judge had made a fine stone mausoleum with stained glass windows. Naturally, he's desirous to share living quarters with her from then on.



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!



By the time "None But the Lonely Heart" was published, Graham Ingels had placed his distinctive imprimatur on the Old Witch and had perfected his gothic horror style. Like many EC readers who came to a hard end, Howard's greed propelled him to his demise, despite numerous warnings and portents that something was amiss (including the whining of his dog, King).

You, yum.... That Old Crosse tells a tasty tale, but she does carrion, if you gruesome groupies got my drooding drift.... Heh, heh, heh. I'm a much better Master of Scare-a-Monies than that croak in a cloak!!



Jack Davis took Feldman's concept of the Crypt Keeper and embellished it. "When Jack Davis walked in," recalls Al Feldman, "I took him on immediately because I thought his style would be perfect for horror stories."



In EC science fiction, even insects have feelings and can seek revenge against the cruelties of human injustice.

Wired Science and Wired Fantasy were where Gaines and Feldman placed many of their morbid tales of extraterrestrial reprisal, where giant cockroaches and other alien civilizations from outer space punished insensitive or persecuted humans who showed a flippant disregard for basic human and animal rights.

Gaines once confessed to having a closet vegetarian, and any number of EC stories in both the horror and the science-fiction comics are animal across anthems in which nature and mistreatment of nonhumans results in similar treatment of their tormentors. In "Hell Raked" (Tales from the Crypt #40, Feb/Mar '54, Feldman/Engel) restaurateur Calvin Dugan, a man who revels in making his lobsters meet his end in a fiery hot crash and is himself bonked alive. "Survival or Death" (Tales from the Crypt #31, Aug/Sept '53, Feldman/Davis) is the story of two human officers in a futuristic war who reuse themselves by switching into fight one, another, his survival on a small planet in a water-filled barrel. When the officers' ship sinks the two fight off other crewmen as they reach the planet and finally do it one another by squabbling over a piece of dimensional dung in "The Trophy" (Tales from the Crypt #23, Aug/Sept '51, Feldman/Thruo) which with the tale of Glode Franklin, a wealthy big game hunter who wanders life, crabs for sport, lapping only the hunt for his collection. He finds himself the quarry of a madman, and his three-headed head punts as a trophy becomes a trophy.

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

THE CRYPT OF TERROR IS THE MOST TERRIFYING AND HORRORFUL OF ALL THE STORIES YOU CAN READ IN THIS MAGAZINE. IT IS THE ONLY ONE THAT IS SO TERRIFYING AND HORRORFUL THAT IT WILL MAKE YOU SHIVER AND TREMBLE WITH FEAR AND DREAD. IT IS THE ONLY ONE THAT IS SO TERRIFYING AND HORRORFUL THAT IT WILL MAKE YOU SHIVER AND TREMBLE WITH FEAR AND DREAD. IT IS THE ONLY ONE THAT IS SO TERRIFYING AND HORRORFUL THAT IT WILL MAKE YOU SHIVER AND TREMBLE WITH FEAR AND DREAD.

SURVIVAL... OR DEATH!



By the logic of EC justice, restaurateur Dugan deserved his fate not only for torturing lobsters, but for murdering an impoverished fisherman whose pots he was roasting.

The creature becomes... (The Crypt of Terror #40, Feb/Mar '54, Feldman/Engel) restaurateur Calvin Dugan, a man who revels in making his lobsters meet his end in a fiery hot crash and is himself bonked alive.

Survival or Death... (The Crypt of Terror #31, Aug/Sept '53, Feldman/Davis) is the story of two human officers in a futuristic war who reuse themselves by switching into fight one, another, his survival on a small planet in a water-filled barrel.



The last battle... (The Crypt of Terror #23, Aug/Sept '51, Feldman/Thruo) which with the tale of Glode Franklin, a wealthy big game hunter who wanders life, crabs for sport, lapping only the hunt for his collection. He finds himself the quarry of a madman, and his three-headed head punts as a trophy becomes a trophy.



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Send in the Ghouls



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH

Franklin's end was macabre, and it was often the very gruesome nature of the retributions that delighted the readers, vengeance that frequently came from beyond the grave. This black justice generated the exceptionally black humor provided by the Ghoul-Lanterns, who adored commenting upon the hilariously appropriate nature of

beliefs created these with personalities of their own. They had the capacity to reveal the darker side of human nature abominably humorous. The Ghoul-Lanterns were like wild, unrestrained Lenny Bruce walking around the magazines. The Crypt-Keeper, the Vault-Keeper, and the Old Witch got to mouth off in a way that was not yet common

SEE, HEAR! AND NOW IT'S YOUR VAULT-KEEPER'S TURN TO GORRLE YOUR BLOOD, SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR PRESS, BY DAWN BEHOLD WE ARE STILL SERVING ANOTHER ASSAULTING HORRIBLE FTS FROM AN ORGASM COLLECTOR! THIS LITTLE TELL-EVERY COMES TO YOU THROUGH THE COURTESY OF ADVERTISING MATTERPRESS, INC. MEMBERS OF THE MATRESS THAT SQUEEZES FORWARD AND LETS YOU SQUEEZE WITH MORE! CALL THE SPINE TWISTER!

BEDTIME GORY!

the dense. Interestingly, the EC horror comics were the first "hit" comic books without continuing heroes or positive role model characters. The only constants from one issue to the next were the Crypt-Keeper, the Vault-Keeper, and the Old Witch. Other horror publishers tried to imitate them, but none of the wannabes ever came close to the mystique of the Ghoul-Lanterns.

The most endearing quality about them was that they had no endearing qualities. Completely invertebrate, they dished EC, the characters in the stories, each other, and the readership (er). Worst, former editor of the famous *Spoof* and currently consultant to *Seinfeld*'s snooty collector comics, summarized their ongoing appeal: Games and



The sarcastic use of logos sponsor Nightmare Mattress, who lets you "snore with pure," promises *HAD*'s commercial spoofs.

strong adolescents. (Father still knew best in the early 1980s, the societal snarl of full-on teen rebellion was still a few years off.) The kids are it up.

Part of the appeal of the Crypt-Keeper, the Vault-Keeper, and the Old Witch was that they were not the least bit pretentious about being reprehensible.

These photos are actually a shot of Vault-Keeper actor Johnny Craig in full ghoul regalia, with makeup by Al Feldstein. Over a relatively short span of time, EC comics developed a devoted following that years later played a major part in the Crypt-Keeper's triumphant resurrection.



Assembly Years
The Vault-Keeper

ANOTHER, ANOTHER... LET'S DRINK BLOOD POWER! THIS IS YOUR LAST IN THE DEPTHS OF TERROR, THE
 DRY-ROCK, READY TO LEAD ANOTHER BOMBARDMENT BY NARRATING ONE OF THE SUBSTITUTED APP-
 EALIZED FROM AN OBEYING COLLECTION OF LOOSE LITERATURE. SO, HOLD ON TO YOUR LAST SOUL, HERE
 MEETS THE FULL HELLER'S WILL.

OUT OF HIS HEAD!

The GhouLunatics also performed another very important function. They provided a contrasting external point of view that kept the reader outside the story. Like the chorus in Greek tragedy on the prominence in a leader, their presence was humorously reminding, a reminder to the reader that it was "just a story."

Part of Feldstein's editing duties included coming up with the snappy, repetitive that made the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper, and the Old Witch so appealing (and appalling), and breathing life into the GhouLunatics was an assignment he pulled off with great panache. He had them each address the "audience" directly, freely sprinkling their dialogue with heavily barny, more, painful puns and awful alliterations as maddening as they were (not to mention corny), you couldn't help laughing.

Until the GhouLunatics came along, there hadn't been much to laugh at about horror, certainly not for adolescents. Now there was.

Much in the same way that Al and Bill had collaborated on responses to the "advance to the lockroom" columns in the pre-*Final* comics, the two now colluded on answers to letters from EC's growing legion of fans, written in the personas of the GhouLunatics.

It didn't take long for Gaines and Feldstein to realize they had a popular character in the Crypt Keeper. By issue #28 (April/May '54), they were offering pleases for a done apiece. The Crypt Keeper reached out to the readership, asking their input on such grandly endearing as "The Horror Hit Parade." EC devotees came up with such Top 40 candidates as a Pam Page newspaper called the "Tennessee Warts," the southern favorite "Lady of Pain (I Will Give You)," and a deadly desecration on Gene Kelly's theme song, "In Back in the Coffin Again (On Where a Head Is a Head)"

Although EC comics may have shocked some adults, the Crypt Keeper's over-the-top dialogue was never taken seriously by the readership.



ANOTHER, ANOTHER... LET'S DRINK BLOOD POWER! THIS IS YOUR LAST IN THE DEPTHS OF TERROR, THE DRY-ROCK, READY TO LEAD ANOTHER BOMBARDMENT BY NARRATING ONE OF THE SUBSTITUTED APP- EALIZED FROM AN OBEYING COLLECTION OF LOOSE LITERATURE. SO, HOLD ON TO YOUR LAST SOUL, HERE MEETS THE FULL HELLER'S WILL.

DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES...



The primary distinction among the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper, and the Old Witch was visual. The GhouLunatics were quite similar in their demeanor, their panache, and the way they introduced their stories.

There really was a genuine relationship between the staff and the fans. Gaines, the biggest fan of all, wanted his readers to appreciate his publications as much as he did. His raucous read-aloud sessions were largely responsible for the reconnection by the GhouLunatics that fans read the stories out loud to one another.



"Writers are God's creatures. Without the writer you have no theater, you have no television, you have no radio, you have no movies, you have no books, you have no magazines—you have *nothing*! The artist can enhance a good story, but he can't save a bad one. He's very important, but he's not as important as the writer. We never thought so."

—Bill Gaines

In the Beginning Was the Word

Like the snap ending and the *Ghost* format, another hallmark of EC stories was a love of language, often over and above the pictures that accompanied them. Among other virtues for Gaines "springboards" were the *Letters* files, a pulp magazine, in which many of Ray Bradbury's early stories had appeared.

There were occasions when Gaines' "springboards" did not "spring" quite far enough from Bradbury's originals,

and in 1952 EC got a letter from Bradbury, in their a mixed best-selling author.

Bradbury, a comic book fan from was far k, got a big kick out of what Gaines and Telleman had done with his work. He was not upset that EC had used his material, only that they'd done so without asking. I'm glad Bradbury's accusation of plagiarism was confined to magazine-street humor. I'm sure that you're overlooked sending me lovely presents he

"The Coffin" (Mast of issue #116, Nov. Dec. '52) was the first "authorized" EC Bradbury adaptation.

In early '53 Bradbury was stung by criticism that he was muzzing his literary reputation by "writing for" comic books. His relationship with EC remained more than cordial, but at about the time that these stories appeared, he asked Gaines to stop using his name on the covers.

THE CRYPT OF TERROR



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

LET'S PLAY POOL!



THE LONG YEARS!



THE WITCH'S GAULDROWN!

THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN!



The Ray Bradbury-EC Mutual Admiration Society

April 18, 1962

Dear Bill:

By all means please show this letter to Jack Daxa and Joe Orlando. I want to thank them for the painstaking work they did on "The Coffin" and "The Long Years." I got a great deal of pleasure looking at the silver prints of the adaptations. Thanks so much for sending them on! And please thank Al for the fine layout work, and the adaptations themselves! This is a real adventure for me!...I've nothing but the kindest regard and love for you, Mr. Daxa, and Mr. Orlando, for your beautiful and intensely and clearly thought-out and carefully plotted. Long may we all work together! My blessings to you all!

Yours, Ray



one of my stories." Gaines sent off a check and a letter of apology *just de zeste*. All was forgiven, and soon thereafter Bradbury's stories began appearing regularly in EC comics. Bradbury's compensation was the princely sum of \$25 for each one.

Bradbury eventually gave his permission for Heinlein to adapt all of his stories from *Golden Apples of the Sun*, *The Golden Game*, and *The Martian Chronicles*, a process that prompted *AI* to go back and read more

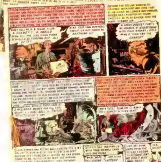
of Bradbury's work. "Because I was so impressed with his writing, I was trying to capture as much of it as I could in the captions. The more Bradbury's work I read, the more flowery I became in my own writing," Heinlein admits with a smile. This created something of a production problem in the shop: "I wanted to use more and more narrative captions to move the story along, and then break into the dialogue. The artists were complaining that I



weren't leaving them any room to draw. Pretty soon the letters in the magazines had hunchbacks because they were ducking under the heavy tops."

Feldman's stories are indeed much wordier than other comics of the time, and there have been any number of readers (not just artists) who found this to be a flaw, rather than an asset. "Whenever this 'problem' was brought to his attention, Gaines was monumentally unsympathetic. Feldman's stories were 'very test-tube,'" he conceded in 1983, adding a big so-called, "and that's because Al and I both got consumed with his words. He wrote so beautifully

with a lot of text it was quite a problem for the artist to squeeze in a drawing, but every found creative solution in this challenge—including the use of forehead space for dialogue.



THE LEROY QUESTION

At Gaines' direction, EC letterer Jim Wrotten used the Leroy mechanical lettering system for **Tales from the Crypt** and the other horror comics. It gave the text great uniformity, but the stiff Leroy format was not a good stylistic match with the magazines. When Harvey

Kurtzman began editing EC's war comics **Frontline Combat** and **Two-Fisted Tales**, he went with hand lettering instead—a choice Feldman in hindsight would have preferred.



Leroy lettering appears formal and rigid.



Hand lettering is looser, allowing use of much bolder text for emphasis.

Why was Leroy lettering used? Because Ed had inherited both the system and its operator from his father. Wrotten had started out as a salesman for a drafting company named Kuffel & Esser, which made slide rules and Leroy lettering templates. "My father, when he did *Wonder Woman*, used Leroy lettering," Gaines recalled.

Gaines also mentioned that Leroy was the only way that Al's text-heavy stories would fit in the panels. "Because Al used so many words, we found we could do it more clearly with Leroy lettering. If we had wanted a hand letterer to work that small, to get all that copy in, it would have been very difficult for him," Gaines told *Comics Journal*.

The Star System

Even before the debut of *New Trend*, Gaines had shown a knack for hiring quality artists. Graham Ingels was already in residence when Al Feldstein arrived in March of 1948, working first in the old western comic's *Gunfighter* and *Raidle Justice*. Johnny Esang was another early arrival. As a puner when there was a formulaic, assembly-line mentality in most comic book houses, EC, under the leadership of Gaines and Feldstein adopted a hands-on approach that in short order produced a reputation for quality that endures to this day. Word got out quickly within the small community of comic book artists in New York that EC was a congenial shop. Not surprisingly, many of the best gravitated to EC during the *New Trend* era, including such legends as the late greats as Jack Davis, Jack Kamen, Wally Wood, George Evans, Harvey Kurtzman, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando, and Will Elder.

Each of these men had a remarkable career in his own right, but as a team, they nurtured each other's creative talents and all contributed to the *Cyber* mix. Life in the office was a sort of creative bedlam, presided over by Gaines, now the *enfant terrible* not just of his family but of the comic world. "Everybody knew everybody..." recalled Gaines of his *New Trend* artists in the 1980 interview in *Gaines Journal*. "They had a tremendous admiration for one another. Wally Wood would come in with a story and three artists would crowd around him and just, just pointing over every headline and panel, and of course Wally, who's

Every panel was a masterpiece, a real Pablo Picasso. When it came to art, ole Bill Gaines wouldn't put up with any hatchet work, heh, heh. Who could axe for anything more?



This EC family portrait by columnist Marie Severin shows the spirit of brotherly that existed among the artists and staff.



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

Each story was written with a specific artist in mind. Gaines announced who the target was at each morning springboard meeting, telling Feldstein, "Today we're writing an eight-page lead for Ingels for *Haunt of Fear*. As soon as I'd say that, both our minds were in a certain frame of reference for Ingels. With Ingels, you know what we're looking for: Yuchh! Rotting corpses, moors..."

HEE-HEE! I SEE BY YOUR PALE WIDE-EYED FLUSH THAT YOU MANAGED TO SCROUNGE A DIME FOR MY BAD-WAG! WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR MINEY'S WORTH ALL RIGHT! YEAH, IT'S ME AGAIN! THE OLD WITCH! WITNESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR! TEE! ALREADY MY CAULDRON IS BUBBLING AND BOILING WITH ITS REEKING BREW OF STARE TERROR! COME IN AND I'LL SERVE YOU UP A SAMPLE! GOT YOUR BROOD-CUPS FASTENED? GOOD! HERE, SOCS WITH THE HORROR-HELPERS I CALL...

DOZE IN THE GELLAR?



SHE'S THROTTLED IN THE GELLAR AND BRING UP GREAT THE WICKY GUP OF DUM-DEE AND LELAY WATTED UP WITH FALGEL'S WIFE. DOLL SIGNED AS HER BISHA HUBBARD STAFFED DOWN THE DEARDED STEPS WITH THE DENTON OF ONE CAULDRON IN HIS BOW.

"PLEASE, MISS! THE GELLAR IS SO CLUTTERED ALREADY! PERHAPS THE MATCHBOX OF THE ORPHANGE NEXT DOOR COULD DOB THE CLOTHES! WHY SAVE THEM?"

"IN THIS HOUR, WE DON'T FAVOR AWAY ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL, ESILY! WE'VE CAN TELL WHEN YOU MIGHT NEED SOME OLD HASS!"

getting this adulation, sits there and loves it. Next time around it's his turn to adulate someone. Everybody tried to outdo each other, which is one of the reasons we got such incredibly good art. They were all in a friendly competition. ...And it was wonderful. Just a nice, warm place."

They were also trying to impress Gaines, who gushed appreciatively over each effort, praising every nuance. The EC ambience of camaraderie and high-spirited one-upmanship made each artist strive to do his best. This work environment was deliberately cultivated by Gaines,

who went out of his way to make sure it was the direct opposite of the constant criticism he'd heard throughout his own childhood. He cherished his role as paterfamilias to his merry band of artists (a precursor to *MAD*'s "usual gang of idiots"), and I clished the idea that they vied with one another for his favor.

As Joe Orlando recalled, "I enjoyed working on the stories, living with them for a week or two. It was almost a sexual thing. The thimex was delivering a job and Bill laughing. When Bill liked it and Al liked it, it was the end

EVER LOVE SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T LOVE YOU? PRETTY PAINFUL, ISN'T IT? WELL, IT'S NOT HALF AS PAINFUL AS BEING...



"We always knew exactly who we were writing for," says Feldstein. "A Jack Kamen story was almost the polar opposite of Ingefa. For Kamen we developed stories that were lighter and more humorous—pretty women, a little sex, a little double entendre." Kamen stories rarely showed actual bloodshed.

"Bill Gaines was to EC Comics as Louis B. Mayer was to MGM."

—Ray C. Fisher

FOR THE FIRST SCENE OF THIS TOUCHING TALE, LET'S LOOK IN ON THE APARTMENT OF MARGARET WHEAT... WHERE A DELICIOUS LITTLE EPISODE IS BEING... A. O. S. 1947



"I'M 'IN BONEY EDWARDS' I NEED TO DO IT!" ROSE
WILL YOU PLEASE GO!
AND DON'T EVER ANNOY ME AGAIN!"

"BUT MARGE! I'M MAD ABOUT YOU! WON'T YOU LET ME TAKE YOU OUT... JUST DANCE TONIGHT!" ROSE WHEAT?



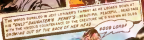
"The whole process and you lived for it. Nothing else mattered—nothing."

"Bill Gaines was to EC Comics as Louis B. Mayer was to MGM movies," notes Russ Cochran, publisher of the complete series of EC reprints. "Just as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had the lion's share of the greater Hollywood stars of the 1930s and 1940s, Gaines had as his goal the building of a 'star-system' for the best comic book artists in the business. He gradually built up his stable of artists and he knew exactly which artist to cast in a given part."

Feldstein could not write all the stories, plot parts and writebacks into the mouths of the Creep Keeper, the Vault Keeper, and the Old Witch, and graduate to share of the artwork. Johnny Craig took over the Vault Keeper and assumed responsibility for the final story in the Hall of Mirrors (Gaines and Feldstein continued to collaborate on the rest.) Cochran largely, who had really formed his interest with horror, was given the job of running the Old Witch. And Jack Davis, who had joined EC after arriving from Atlanta, took on the Creep Keeper.

Two Heads Are Stranger Than One

Sarner's twins were one of Gaines and Feldstein's favorite themes, and they show up in various guises throughout the *New York* series. Feldstein's first was "The Hornback" (*Blond of Fear* #4, Nov./Dec. 1960), followed by "Head-Up" (*Come Sinister* #41), "The Barker" (*Blond of Fear* #7), and "The Neatly-Combeds' Dromine" (*Blond from the Crypt* #28). Others include "People Who Live in Brass Houses" (*Blond of Fear* #27), "Chew-Meat" (*Blond of Fear* #25), and of course the *Crypt Keeper* origin tale, "Lower Berth" (*Blond from the Crypt* #38, Feldstein/Gaines). Feldstein speculated in liner notes John Benson that the affection he and Gaines shared for the twin-series might have reflected "Bill's and my interdependence upon each other, that we were like Sarner was in the way we worked together." Another possibility, however, is that they mirrored writer's burgeoning interest about genetic mutation as a result of nuclear disaster. Toward the end of the *New York* run, two other "sarner" twins appeared, "My Brother's Keeper" (*Dark Sinister* #14) and "About Face" (*Blond of Fear* #25); both were written by literateur Carl Weselley.



In most twin stories, like "My Brother's Keeper" (Gep. Weselley/Gaines) and "The Barker" (Griswold/Gaines), there is one good head and one evil head, but in "Chew-Meat" (directly above, Feldstein/Gaines) and "People Who Live in Brass Houses" (right, Feldstein/Gaines), both are good.

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

Grim Fairy Tales



The Grim Fairy Tale introduction by the Crypt-Keeper acknowledges that he was poaching on what was normally the Old Witch's terrain.

Ricky R. Ruffs, while had their *Fairytale Jamboree*, EC had its *Grim Fairy Tales*. Because Jack Kamen's specialty was "horror lite," he was a logical choice to draw them. "I liked them," he told Sam Kingdon in a 1986 interview, "because Al Feldstein would put innocuous touches on them. A typical one was 'The Sleeping Beauty' when she was on top to be a vampire. And the little girl telling the story looks like [respectably '50s word and Milton Biehl's "sugarbun"] Arnold Strong."

Kamen had a regular slot in *House of Fear*, and many of the *Grim Fairy Tales* appeared there. "Blonde & Green" portrayed the two lost children as obnoxious brats who were quite literally eating their parents out of house and home. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" has the Wicked Queen getting the bad news about who is the finest of them all not from a mirror, but from a TV screen.

hearing the likeness of Hooty Dooty. She learns that the executioner didn't kill Snow White from another TV image—this time it's rubber-laced Joe E. Brown. Snow White herself is eventually done as by the seven Dwarfs themselves, who use of her compassionate mistress. (This was something of an EC in-joke, since Bill Gaines, contrary to his trumpeted democracy, was comparatively ugly.)

DO YOU FEEL BORED, THE LITTLE OLD LADY? HAH! SHE'S GETTING READY TO **ROAST THE BRATS ALIVE!** ALL SHE WAS GOING WAS GETTING THE FIRE STARTED IN THE OVEN TO BAKE A CAKE IN CELEBRATION OF WEDDING, AND SHE'S HERE TO LIVE WITH YOU.



IT'S A GOOD THING SHE'S NOT HERE WITH YOU, AND SHE'S NOT GOING TO BE BURNED EITHER.



WHEN MARCH AND DATED, MARCHED HER IN.



In the *Grim Fairy Tales*, the characters we know as good from the originals often turned evil, and vice versa.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S FIANCÉ GLEEFING.

AND I DRINK THEIR BLOOD FOR YOU SEE.



THE SEVEN LITTLE DWARFS STARTED HOME, MAKING THEIR HOMEWARD-BOUND MARCHING BOSS. FIRST LEAD MARCHING... THEN, SECOND... FOLLOWED BY... THIRD... THEN... SEVEN... AND FINALLY STOP.



The Arnold Strong look-alike dwarf named "Snappd" brings up the rear, carrying a book by "Melvin Spillane," a parody on the name of popular '50s tough guy crime novelist Mickey Spillane.

Let the Artists Create

Once Gaines had provided the springboard, he knew enough to get out of the way. The rest of his time was taken up with the minutiae of running a business—paying bills, dealing with printers and distributors, haggling on the phone. Feldstein worked with his team of artists the way he himself liked to work—in short, he told them what the art was supposed to convey, and then let them exercise it however they thought best served the storyline.

“One of the things that I insisted upon from the very beginning was that every artist had his own signature, his own style,” says Feldstein emphatically.

“I did not ask them to imitate [of other *Avon* creators and comics legends] Jack Kirby or to mirror whatever was popular at the time. We had a stable of artists doing their stuff. We talked-made stories for each of these guys. They got the artwork with the lettering already on it, all they had to do was draw.”

Feldstein sat down with each artist and went over the story. “We’d talk, but I’d never tell anyone how to do it,” recalls Feldstein. “If the story called for a truck plunging over a cliff, he could draw the scene from any perspective he wanted. The artist could depict this looking down from an aerial view, or assume a position standing under the truck looking up as it came over. I didn’t want to inhibit him in any way. I never resisted on layouts because I think it takes away some of the creativity.”

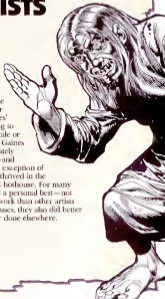
Feldstein’s approach was diametrically opposed to that of Harvey Kurtzman. The difference was roughly the same as that between our film director who sees movies as a collaborative medium and seeks ideas input from actors and technicians, and another who views himself as the writer and feels the movie is his own. Either approach can yield quality work. Harvey put out two superbly researched and edited war-magazine comics called *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*, but unlike *AV* was almost pathologically unable to delegate any creative decision-making whatsoever to his artists. Kurtzman did his own layouts and insisted that his artists follow them meticulously. Some rebelled (George Evans among them), and took to deliberately obscuring small details in the background just to get Harvey’s goat.

GIs made up a substantial portion of EC’s adult readership, and their war and horror comics were especially popular with troops in Korea. In *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*, Kurtzman was determined that all drawings of rifles, helmets, and other military paraphernalia be completely accurate. When Jack Davis brought him artwork depicting an Army corporal’s hat, he growled, “No, Jack, the gasser pad goes to the right of the visor!”



THE EC CONSTELLATION OF COMIC BOOK ARTISTS

During the *New Trend* era, EC became a magnet for talented artists, and Bill Gaines' stable was the envy of the comic book world. Other publishers coveted Gaines' stars, but were not willing to match either EC's pay scale or the artistic freedom that Gaines and Feldstein so deliberately cultivated. All the men—and they were men, with the exception of colorist Marie Severin—thrived in the general luxury of the EC hothouse. For many their time at EC marked a personal best—not only did they do better work than other artists were doing for other houses, they also did better work than they had ever done elsewhere.







“Comic books were printed with metal plates on the cheapest paper you could get — it was like one grade above toilet paper. If you look at the original artwork, you will see that artists who worked at EC put in tiny details, little minute scratches of the pen or brush, into their drawings that they knew would not show up with cheap comic book reproduction. I couldn't figure out why these guys went to all the trouble to do that, knowing it wouldn't reproduce, until I realized that they were doing it for each other. There was a mutual admiration society among the artists at EC. They were always trying to impress one another. It was a labor of love.”

— Russ Cochran



SLOWLY HE OPENED THE FRENCH DOOR AND ENTERED



COOPER? GOOD LORD!
WHAT? WHAT YOU
LOOK LIKE

I I'VE COME TO
TO KILL YOU
JUDGE?

THE JUDGE SNATCHED A POKER FROM THE NEARBY
PREPLASE AND AS COOPER ADVANCED TOWARD HIM



KEEP AWAY, COOPER! KEEP AWAY!
ALL RIGHT! YOU FORCE ME TO

YAAAAAH!



AL FELDSTEIN

Born in October 1925, Al Feldstein is the son of a Russian immigrant father and first-generation Polish mother, and was an early graduate of the school of hard knocks. In 1938, his father's dental laboratory went under. At age fourteen he took on an after-school job to help the family make ends meet. While still enrolled in Manhattan's High School of Music and Art, he found work at Eisner & Iger, a large comic "factory." Al started as little more than a gopher, running errands and cleaning up pages. Eisner & Iger worked on an assembly line system, and the work was passed from hand to hand. Eventually Feldstein was permitted to do background work, first just inking, then drawing and inking, and finally he was given responsibility for mixing figures.

For Al it was all marking time, however. He wanted to be an art teacher, and began taking education courses at Brooklyn College by day and art classes at the Art Students League at night. In 1943, he joined the Army Air Corps and spent the rest of the war doing artwork (painting signs and murals and decorating aviator jackets) at various airfields, beginning in Blytheville, Arkansas. After he was mustered out in '45, Feldstein decided to return to school to finish getting his credential as an art teacher. While waiting for the new semester to begin at Columbia, however, he returned to his old studio, now called simply S. M. Iger (Will Eisner had left to go off on his own.)

Iger's shop did work for a variety of publishers, including Fiction House, Fox Features Syndicate, and Quality House. Jerry Iger had industrialized the comic book process and was making a bundle. His "bulper" included Bob Weirb (Sheena, Queen of the Jungle), and two eventual EC regulars, Reed Crandall (Blackhawk) and Jack Kamen. "Iger made a lot of money on them," recalls Feldstein. "He would pay the artists \$75 a week. For that they'd do two pages a day, which he was selling for \$30 a page. When I got wise to what he was up to, I decided to freelance."



Feldstein drew the original Crypt Keeper, and often had him looking straight out at the reader.

Walking corpses and things returned from the dead — as well as people's astonished reactions to them — were a particular Feldstein specialty.

As a freelancer, Feldstein worked on several hardly memorable comics, including *Hop Hazard*, *Aggie Meek*, and *Seven Seas*. Feldstein was freelancing for Victor Fox at Fox Features Syndicate, contributing to *Western Outlaws*, *Western Thrillers*, and *Western Killers*. He was also working on three teen comics: *Junior*, *Sunny*, *America's Sweetheart*, and *Meet Corless Archer* (which soon became *My Life*), when he was asked to show his portfolio to Bill Gaines.

With the exception of a brief lapse between the demise of *New Tread* and his return to edit *MAD*, Feldstein worked at EC continuously from 1948 till his retirement in 1965. During that time he wrote and edited the EC horror and science-fiction comics, the short-lived *New Direction* and *Picto-Fiction* series, the *MAD*-clone *Panic*, and eventually *MAD* itself.

After his long busy stint in comics, Al fled the sidewalks of New York for the Big Sky country of Montana, where he indulges his passion for painting and fly fishing.

ELDSTEIN

Feldstein has self-deprecatingly called his style "rigid and hard"; fans disagree. His stiffness and bold outlines capture the paralysis and petrification that comes with a moment of fear or pain (not to mention rigor mortis), and his cover artwork is much sought after by collectors.

Even after Al Feldstein stopped doing story art, he continued drawing covers (issues with his covers sold especially well).

THE THING WAS ON TOP OF HIM, PINNING HIM DOWN! HE TRIED TO STRUGGLE, BUT THE THING WAS STRONG! IT HELD HIM FAST!





Orlando's rounded forms and buxom women reminded many of the work of his friend and mentor, Wally Wood.

AND THEN HIS BODY... A BODY NOT ABLE TO WITHSTAND SUCH A GRAVITATIONAL POOL... JUST SEEMED TO MELT... SPREADING OUT IN A RED POLPY POOL OF DOZE...



Orlando revisited attacks on EC comics but was most concerned about the reaction from friends and family. "I was worried about my mother saying, 'I hear you're doing external work destroying the minds of kids — and your friends are all a bunch of Communists.'"

JOE ORLANDO

Born in Bari, Italy, in 1927, Orlando came to New York as a toddler. After serving with the Army in World War II, he studied at the Art Students League before forming a small studio with Wally Wood and another comic book artist named Harry Harrison. It was Wood who coaxed him into bringing the portfolio to EC in 1952.

Orlando fit in with the EC "family" right away. "Bill and I had a lot in common," he recalls. "We'd both had very bad relationships with our fathers which certainly affected our personalities. It produced a certain rebelliousness."

Other artists in the EC stable may have been a bit squeamish about doing horror comics. Not Joe: "I got my emphasis on horror from going to church every Sunday. As I sat there listening to the sermon, I concentrated on those bloody wounds of all the saints — arrows in the chest, blood pouring out, all the rest."

As Wertham and other critics of EC comics closed in, Orlando's rebellious nature vented: "Bill didn't have the chutzpah to do this, but when they were trying to put us out of business I wanted to get even with all those self-righteous religious hypocrites. I told Bill, 'Let's do the Bible in the real way, come in close on the spikes in the hands and the legs rapping the Christians apart. The next cover should be Christ on the cross, blood oozing. They think we did horror? We'll show 'em what horror really is!'"

When Bill Gaines stopped publishing, Orlando found work at Marvel Comics under Stan Lee. By 1957, however, Al Feldstein had fired him back as a regular contributor to **MAD**. Nine years later he became an editor at DC Comics (National Periodical Publications), which by the time owned **MAD** magazine, where he is now an Associate Publisher.



Joe Orlando

THIS IS THE TALE OF TWO PEOPLE WHO VISITED AN AMUSEMENT PARK... AND WERE NOT / MISERABLE / I CALL IT..

TERROR RIDE!



It was a suicidal job/Easy was easy / One would be... /

SCARED TO DEATH!



Wood's work was characterized by a dramatic use of light and shadow.

On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



On the left, I see a lot of... / in the right, I see a lot of... /



WALLY WOOD

Born in Minnesota in 1927, Wally Wood landed around in a series of odd jobs until World War II. He was still underage when he enlisted in the military, serving both in the merchant marine and as a paratrooper. After the war he finished his education at New York's School of Visual Arts, and began his comic book career working on Milton Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates* and Will Eisner's *The Spirit*.

In 1950 he joined DC, and became known as the "Dean of Comic Book Science Fiction," working frequently on *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*. Wood was one of Harvey Kurtzman's favorites, and worked with him on *MAD*, where his ability to imitate the styles of other artists fit well with the magazine's penchant for parody. Wood was the man who drew *Supergirl* in a style close enough for *Supergirl*'s owners to bring suit.

Beyond his skill as a mimic was a strong personal style of his own, highlighted by deft use of detail and a rounded, realistic anatomical representation of the human form. His work was characterized by a dramatic use of light and shadow, giving his drawings almost a chiaroscuro effect. In facing health problems beginning in the late 1970s, Wood took his own life rather than face dependency on kidney dialysis. He passed away in 1981.



Wally Wood drew the classic "My World" about what it's like to work in science fiction, but the story was actually written by Al Feldstein.

JACK DAVIS

Jack Davis was the Norman Bates of EC Comics. Born in 1926, he spent most of World War II in the Navy (drawing for the *Navy News*). Following the war, he attended the University of Georgia on the GI Bill, where he and some fraternity brothers put out a shoot-from-the-hip campus magazine called *Bullbaiter*.

Davis joined EC in 1951, after having studied at New York's Art Students League. He walked into Al Feldstein's office one day and never really left. Davis had a scratchy kind of style with a great deal of line work, and a bit of his country boy nascent creeped into his art. When Gaines and Feldstein were matching a story to his capabilities, we gave him the "joked stories or small town stories," recalls Feldstein, "stories with kids, either robbing graves or carrying a coffin down the street."

A mild-mannered, soft spoken southerner from Atlanta, there was nothing in his demeanor that suggested a knack for horror. However, he turned out freaks, monsters, and ghouls that had a grisly appeal of their own. Unlike Ingels' dripping cadavers, which had long since ceased being *Home* sapients, Davis' creations were scary precisely because they were almost human. He knew just which parts of the anatomy to torque in order to turn just folkie into just ogres. As Al Feldstein became increasingly burdened with his writing duties, he tipped Davis to take over drawing the *Crypt Keeper*. Davis was quick and efficient, a quality that pleased the overburdened Feldstein but troubled the frisky Harvey Kurtzman, who once remarked, "The one fault I found with Jack was that he worked too fast."



THE DRY HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO BARKEN WHEN THE CHILDREN, DRESSED IMPROBABLE IN THEIR BEST SUNDAY CLOTHES, CAME SLOWLY BY THE STREET, CARRYING THE CRUDE WOODEN COFFIN ON THEIR SMALL SHOULDERS. THEIR LITTLE MOUTHS WERE SET DRYLY. THEIR EYES BLESTERLING WITH TEARS. MR. COOTER LOOKED UP FROM HIS SHREDDING WORK AND SHRINKED.

"WELL, I'LL BE DORNED."



Davis could draw everything from fearful children to homicidal maniacs, but the gibbet-taxed "Yowl Play" (above) is one story he'd rather forget.

Davis had a scratchy kind of style with a great deal of line work.



One of Davis' many strong points was his mastery of facial expressions. Both the owl and the prokistat convict demonstrate how Davis could effortlessly shift from horror into MAD.



Although their features were distorted, the human lineage of Davis' necromancers, vampires, and other monsters was always evident.



HARVEY KURTZMAN

Harvey Kurtzman was born in New York in 1924, and attended the High School of Music and Art with Bill Elder. He was taking courses at Cooper Union when he was drafted into the Army in 1942. At the end of the war, he did **Ney Look**, a one-page humor strip, for Stan Lee at Timely/Marvel. Harvey came to EC in 1948, essentially by mistake. Bill Gaines was already taking EC into its "Entertaining" mode, but the phone book still listed the company as "Educational Comics." Kurtzman arrived for an interview hoping to do nonfiction work, but his first EC job was an assignment that only MAD might come up with: Bill's uncle, David Gaines, was putting out educational handbooks in comic book form, and Bill sent Kurtzman to David to draw **Lucky Fights It Through**, a comic book about gonorrhea.

He worked on the horror comics before editing **Two-Fisted Tales** and **Frontline Combat**, gutsy, realistic war comics that did not glorify mortal combat. Kurtzman loved the fighting man, but hated the fighting, and many of his stories vividly convey this philosophy.

In 1952 he began editing MAD, drawing on campus humor magazines for inspiration. After an acrimonious tussle with Gaines, Kurtzman left in 1955 to start **Trump** for Hugh Hefner, plus **Humbug**, **Hot!!**, and **Little Annie Fanny** with Bill Elder. He passed away in 1983.

H. Kurtzman

THE HOUSE OF HORROR COMICS SERIES IS A COLLECTION OF 10 VOLUMES, EACH WITH 100 PAGES OF HORROR COMICS. THE SERIES IS NOW AVAILABLE IN A BOX SET FOR \$49.95. ORDER TODAY!



Kurtzman was never fond of the horror genre, but his inneck for satire and his cartoon figures were clearly suited to MAD.



Kurtzman had to rein in his gift for caricature and parody to work in horror, but he later inspired a whole new generation of underground cartoonists.

Elder was and is a master at mimicking the styles of other artists.

BILL (WILL) ELDER

Bill Elder (he didn't become Will until later in his career) was born William Wolf Eisenberg in the Bronx in 1923. The son of Polish immigrants, he attended New York's High School of Music and Art (as did many comic book artists). He had been an ardent comics fan in his youth, and was particularly fond of *LFI Abner* and the *Katzenjammer Kids*. During World War II, Elder served in the Army Air Corps as a map designer. Believing his assignment would keep him behind the lines, he was horrified to find himself ahead of the rest of the troops, gathering information, and was in the thick of things during the Battle of the Bulge.

Elder was a high school cheer of Harvey Kurtzman, and the two shared many aspects of their careers. He was something of a class clown. He was also something of an "anarchist." Like the Marx Brothers, he enjoyed creating art that made large tears in the "fabric of society," and exposing hypocrisy whenever he found it. It was a life philosophy tailor-made for *MAD*.

Elder's drawing of a "just drooped" St. Nick for Al Feldstein's *Panic* lacked all legal battles both in Massachusetts and New York. Like Willy Wood, Elder was and is a master at mimicking the styles of other artists. It was Elder who drew *MAD*'s withering takeoffs on Mickey Mouse (*Mickey Redent*), and Archie (*Sizatch*) — in a style blisteringly close to the original. After leaving *MAD* with Kurtzman in 1956, he was involved with subsequent Kurtzman ventures including *Trump*, *Humbig*, and *Helg*. In 1962 the two began collaborating on *Playboy*'s risqué *Little Annie Fanny*, ending in 1969.

Bill Elder



THE LEFT ADDRESS FROM THESE MAIL BOX LETTERS OF BIRTH WILL BE THE ADDRESS FOR THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL IN THE 1950'S. ONLY IN A YEAR OR MORE. AFTER THE 1950'S THE JOURNAL WILL BE PUBLISHED FROM THE NEW YORK CITY OFFICE. THE ADDRESS OF THE OFFICE IS: 100 W. 42ND ST., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10018.



Elder's comic sensibilities are visible even in his horror drawings.

Crandall's use of fine shading and cross-hatching was admired by other artists, and gave his work an etchinglike quality.

REED CRANDALL

Reed Crandall was born in Indiana in 1917 and educated at the Cleveland School of Art. In 1940, he began with the Eisner-Iger shop (where the very young Al Feldstein also worked), then moved on to Quality comics, where he worked on *Hit Comics* and *Crack*. Although he was not the originator of the characters he drew the very successful *Blackhawk* and *Doll Men* in the late 1940s.

Like virtually all the other artists in Gaines' stable, Crandall was not "recruited." In a *Comics Journal* interview, Gaines recalled, "Crandall was the last EC artist to arrive. He walked in and said, 'I'm Reed Crandall.' I said, 'So what took you so long?' 'We've been sitting here waiting for you!'"

Crandall arrived in 1960 with his highly regarded portfolio, and was looked up to by the rest of the EC staff. Feldstein had him assignments right away, putting him to work on the fine horror titles, and especially on *Shock Suspense Stories* and *Crime Suspense Stories*. He also drew a *Ray Bradbury* adaptation, "The Silent Town," for *World Fantasy*. When Gaines was forced to fold the *New Trend*, Crandall worked on *New Direction* titles and began doing cover work for the ill-fated *Picto-Fiction* line.

Following the collapse of EC, he continued to work in comics on such publications as *Genre*, *Creepy*, and *Classics Illustrated*. He passed away in 1983.

REED CRANDALL

Crandall's skillful use of fine line shading gave his work a film noir sensibility evocative of Gustav Hartman and Raymond Chandler.



THE VAULT OF HORROR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



Johnny Gray edited Vault of Horror and drew all its covers. Like Feldstein, he was a master of the single bold image that grabbed readers' eyes across the room.



"THE LADY SLIPPING IN THE HUB, WERE BY MY SIDEWALK TO MY... I DROVE TO A SMALL HOTEL... LIES BIVARIAN, SMALL AND DRAG... SAFE IN AN ROOM 2 FLOOR ON... I SLEEP... AND DREAM"

"I WAKE UP, SEEING HUNDREDS OF MEN IN THE ROOM IS REAL, I FEEL I COULD... TIGHT... THAT SLEEP IS IMPOSSIBLE!" SHE CRASHES INTO MY VERY NICE.

"I PACE THE FLOOR NERVOUSLY, SHE... HER NEW PERFUME IS WITH ME... LEAVING HER WINDSUSPENSE... THOUGH BY EYES ARE SHUT, KNOWING SHE IS CERTAIN... DEATH!"



Craig frequently used humor and fantasy to offset (and thus emphasize) the horror in his stories, and often preferred to suggest rather than overtly depict the shocking finale.



JOHNNY CRAIG

Born in Pleasantville, New York, in 1928, Craig joined EC in 1947 after attending the Art Students League and a stint in the Army during World War II. Craig's style of artwork was clean and uncluttered and extremely commercial. His figures could just as well have been modeling clothing or selling soap, which made their vile

and violent behavior all the more shocking. Many of his horror stories are tales of domestic inequality gone totally awry.

Craig was hired by Max Gaines and was the senior member of the EC staff. When Bill took over, he assigned Craig to draw the first EC horror story, which appeared in *Moons Over Marley* #5. After Feldstein turned his attention to writing, Craig took the lead on *The Vault of Horror*.

He became the man behind the Vault Keeper, drew all of the *Vault* covers, and the lead story. Unlike the other EC artists, Craig wrote his own stories, working directly with Gaines to formulate the plot. A meticulous craftsman, he worked slowly, writing his story in a week and taking another three weeks to draw it.



If it dripped or oozed or rotted,
Ghastly did it better than anyone else.

CONFUSED, BEWILDERED, THE CORPSE OF ROSIE KANE
TRIED TO COMFORT THE HYSTERICAL SCREAMING WOMAN
"I KNOW I HAD TO COME... SO I
CAME" I WALKED ALL THE WAY
TWELVE MILES



AAAAGH



THE WOOD-WITCH? HE GOT IN
THROUGH THE POOPY JARRETS

JARE!
PLEASE... EEEEEEE



BUT I KNOW YOU COULD
NEVER LOVE A RAGMAN!

SCREAMING

HIS GARGLING SCREAM FROZE AWAY AND THE TURBID LIQUID
ROLLED A MOMENT... AND THEN IT, TOO, CURDLED. AND THERE
WAS SILENCE.

THE BLOOD WAS FLOWING NOW! HE COULD FEEL THE
WARM LIQUID BUBBLES OUT OVER HIS WRIST



SCREAMING DEEPER
DEEPER!

Artist Eric Kamen excelled at suggesting the terror
that occurred "effluvia" but perhaps made it quite
visible, so much so that his liquid style capitalized
the gothic horror genre.





GHASTLY GRAHAM INGELS

Born in 1915, Graham Ingels was one of the first artists to come to work for EC, joining the company in 1947 just after Bill Gaines had taken over following the death of his father. Although he worked on westerns, crime, and romance stories, he found his true métier in horror. He became the alter ego of the Old Witch, signing his drawings with his moniker, "Ghastly," a nickname that was only deserved. Although others portrayed horror as just a step or two around the corner from real life, Ingels took it to the extreme. He was, as it were, a master of decomposition, and had his own personal fan following.

He was always uneasy with his talent for the macabre. A devout Catholic, his conscience was increasingly troubled by the horror guests, and even more

so, presumably, by his special knack for it. He developed a dependency on alcohol which led to missed deadlines. To compensate, Feldstein took to describing about when the artwork was really needed, pushing up the deadline by a few days so that when Ingels was "late," he was still on time.

Once Gaines dropped the EC horror comics line under pressure from critics, Ingels had a particularly difficult time. Since he was so well known as a horror expert, publishers had trouble believing he could draw anything else. Eventually he found work teaching at the Famous Artists School in Westport, Connecticut, then moved to Florida to give art lessons out of his home. Once in Florida he deliberately cut himself off from his former life. Gaines had to seek him out to pay him royalties on his work — money which he at first rejected. Before he died in 1991, however, he reconciled with his conscience, and painted a number of sets of the Old Witch to be sold at auction.

GHASTLY
Illustrations



His style is fluid and almost cinematic

AL WILLIAMSON

Al Williamson was the baby of the EC family of artists. When he joined the company in 1952, he was just twenty-one years old, and in many ways was like the 'kid brother': the others were already family men. Born in Bogota, Colombia, he was the only member of the staff who'd been too young to serve during World War II. Williamson was working with Richard Hughes on *Forbidden Worlds* when he brought his portfolio to EC at the suggestion of Wally Wood.

Once taken into the EC fold, he frequently worked in collaboration with Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel, and Angelo Torres, even though he was the only signature that appeared on the panels. Williamson loved pencil work but was "deadly afraid" of inking, a task that Frazetta often undertook for him. His style is fluid and almost cinematic — Williamson liked to use movie stills for reference, and many of his heroes bear a striking resemblance to Stewart Granger. Although Williamson worked on *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror*, he came to specialize in science fiction, both at EC and later on after *New Trend* folded. A graduate of Pratt Institute, Williamson was inspired to be a comic artist by Alex Raymond's *Flesh Gordon*, and eventually went on to follow in Raymond's footsteps, working on *Flesh Gordon* in the 1960s, as well as *Secret Agent Corrigan* and the *Star Wars* comic strip.



THE VAULT OF HORROR!



Williamson's fluid, cinematic style was apparent even in his first assignment (above), and became increasingly evident in his later horror and science fiction work (below) — as did the influence of mentor Alex Raymond. Keyword:



THE ARRIVAL



A Science Fiction Super-Strip

GEORGE EVANS

A Pennsylvania native, George Evans was born in 1920. He took night classes at the Art Students League and jumped right into the comic book field following his stint as an Air Force mechanic in World War II. Perhaps it was the up-close-and-personal relationship with aircraft that gave his illustrations of machinery such power.

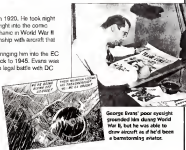
Evans credits (or blames) Al Williamson for bringing him into the EC fold, and the two share a friendship that dates back to 1945. Evans was working full time at Foxrott when their firm lost its legal battle with DC Comics, effectively putting them out of business. DC had alleged that **Captain Marvel** was nothing more than a clone of **Superman**, and won Williamson, who had begun working at EC, encouraged Evans to join the team. He was hired right away. (Evans paid him back by memorializing his name in many of his stories, naming a store "Williamson & Co." or putting up a billboard advertising "Williamson's Hair Tonic.")

With his technical knowledge and his ability to render machinery accurately, Evans was a Kurtzman favorite, but he chafed under Kurtzman's heavy overlays, which specified the exact placement of each figure. Even alterations in the name of greater accuracy (which was a particular Kurtzman trademark) were not appreciated. "Harvey would never say a thing when he saw my changes," recalled Evans, "but after it was published he'd reveal that I'd discovered his story."

George really preferred the freedom of working with Feldstein on the horror magazines. "I loved Bradbury's stories and Al's adaptations because he knew how to keep the Grandbury feeling in his scripts," said Evans in a 1992 interview with Paul Wenzel (published in *Comics Journal*, May 1995). He also felt buoyed by the appreciation that abounded at EC.

This was the joy of working for Al. When you brought in the finished art, he would say, 'Oh geez, I never imagined a picture like that! Look at this, Bill!' And Bill would look and say, 'Holy crapes! Here's another one. Al.' This was a delight. 'You'd work for them for free.'

Evans' pushy sense of humor prompted him to clutter billboards and commercial establishments after pal Al Williamson, in appreciation for Williamson's boost in bringing him to EC. (Note the small sign which reads "Books Inside.")



George Evans' poor eyesight grounded him during World War II, but he was able to draw aircraft as if he'd been a barnstorming aviator.

Evans' work has a stop-action quality — like a moment frozen in time, or a frame clipped from a reel of motion picture film.



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

... ONLY SIN DEEP



"We gave Jack Kamen the Marcus Welby stories,"
Al Feldstein laughs, "you know —
where the nice All-American girl
and guy are married and then
chop each other to pieces."

Nice guy Jack Kamen specialized in placing clean-cut guys and curvaceous girls in shocking situations, and frequently drew the lead story in *Black Suspense*.



JACK KAMEN

Jack Kamen was another member of the EC "stable" who was an alumnus of the Art Students League (Others included Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Al Feldstein, and George Evans.) Born in Brooklyn in 1920, he broke into comic book illustration through a "back door" — work in the pulp magazines. Perhaps it was through this experience that he became known for his ability to render comely, seductive, large-bosomed women.

From the proficiency it naturally followed that he became the acknowledged EC expert in stories dealing with infidelity or the battle of the sexes. Bill Gaines called them "Buster" stories, because sooner or later the led-up young woman always said, "Look, Buster! I've had it!"

Often as not, homicide followed shortly thereafter. Kamen once confessed that he specialized in these types of stories not just because of his unquestionable skill in rendering sexy women, but because he lacked the savor fans of an Ingels or a Davis in dealing with in-your-face gore. After leaving EC, Kamen first switched to advertising and eventually left the field of illustration altogether. He became a prosperous entrepreneur, with both a medical supply and a helicopter business.



In Kamen's stories, violence and bloodshed were almost invariably implied rather than overt. With his use of unusual angles and dramatic contrast of light and shadow, however, Kamen invited readers to imagine the worst.

WHEN THE POLICE CAME TO THE BRISTOL HOME IN ANSWER TO THE NEIGHBOR'S FRANTIC PHONE CALLS, THEY FOUND MISS KAMELING BRIDE STUART'S BODY, CHIPPED AWAY AT HIS CHEST WITH A BLOOD-SOAKED JOE-PAW! SHE'D BEEN AT IT FOR LONG TIME! THEY COULD TELL! AS THE CHOPPED ONE'S BUTTER HYSTERICALLY...



MARIE SEVERIN

Marie Severin was one of the few women admitted to what was very much the boys' clubhouse among the comic book artists.

She was also the last person to touch the artwork before it went off to the printer. Severin was EC's colorist — it was her selection of bright pure hues that added an extra layer of fright to the artists' pencils. She also added a layer of continuity that was sometimes lacking. Some artists would include a belt or piece of jewelry or other article of clothing in one panel, but omit it thereafter. This kind of detail might be missed when the art was black & white, but Severin would be able to pick it up.

All Feldstein only half-jokingly referred to Marie Severin as the "conscience" of EC. Gaines and Feldstein both allege that she subdued any panel she found overly gory by using dark blues or purples rather than her customary brighter colors, an assertion Severin denies, saying, "I would have no right to obliterate art."

After leaving EC, Severin enjoyed a lengthy career at Marvel, working on *The Hulk* and a Marvel superhero parody entitled *Not Brand Echh*.



FEATURING



THE DUFFY-BEEPER



THE COLLEGER



THE WALL-BEEPER



Severin added color and gave instructions to printers for matching her hues (above). Today her hand-colored silver prints (left) are prized by collectors. A 1958 self-portrait (below) that shows her visiting a beach (as well as a bucket of whitewash) supports the theory that she was the office censor.



Credit Where It's Due

Freelance artists will tell you that it takes a lot more than just artistic efforts, most to make their graduate around a certain publisher. Boldly put, it takes money, and money for artists was something that Gaines (otherwise a notorious tightwad) was quite willing to part with. Almost from the beginning he paid his artists better than most other comic book publishers. Knowing all too intimately the financial perils of freelancing, Feldstein has to it that they got paid promptly. Whenever an artist came in to deliver a job, he also picked up a check and his next assignment.

To retain Gaines kept the rights to the artwork (as did most comic book publishers). What was unusual was that Gaines also kept the artwork itself, even though it cost him money to do so. When the art overflowed the files of the old office, in 1955 at last, he swapped it in his own leather paper and stockpiled it in a vault on Second Avenue.

"I saved all the art. I just did it because I loved the stuff and I felt that's what you're supposed to do,"

Gaines told EC, collected by expert Grant German (author of *Collectible Man!*) in a 1980 interview. "My father didn't do that and I was always quite angry... If he'd been on the ball we would have had twelve copies of *The Crypt Keeper #1* (printing copies are two each more than \$400,000 apiece), and I think he blew it. I was a kid when that stuff came out, but I remember they were all around the house and we used to thumb them up every once in a while, and those are all ours."

Respecting both the art and the storyline was yet another way that Bill Gaines was trying to escape from his father's shadow, even if he can't seem to have been his father's business. Although he was the founding father of the genre, comics publisher Max Gaines had been remarkably unappreciative

of the artistic merit of the material he published. If it kept the presses turning and it sold, it was good. His editor Sheldon Mayer recalled, "We slapped the books together. Max wasn't concerned with the literary or entertainment part of it. I had to argue to get him to run story strips like *Tom and the Prince* in chronological order."

Bill's admiration for both the art and the artists led to regular "artist spotlights" in the three horror magazines. The "EC Artist of the Issue" departed the cartoonist at his drafting table and provided a thumbnail



All EC regulars eventually were spotlighted as "artist of the issue."

biography. It was yet another means of honoring artist identification with the magazines, and the first EC Fan Club Club was born in 1971.

EC was all by itself in this endeavor. Other publishers, who generally owned their artists and worked on a strict interchangeable parts, did not have any desire to have their readers identify with particular individuals. EC, on the other hand, wanted the fans to know each artist by name. In the *Crypt*



One of the reasons for the *Crypt Keeper's* Corner was that postal regulations required second class mail to have a certain number of pages with nothing but print in each issue.



THE BORN OF INIQUITY!

KAMEN'S KALANITY!



steps to counter the sweepers (an almost
 scientific population poll, keeping tabs
 on its members as if the artists were fair
 voters or political candidates. From this
 "popularity poll," however, may have sprung
 an anticipation among the readers that
 the artists not only drew the stories but
 wrote them as well. There is a sample from
 issue #28 (Feb. Mar. '52)

*"Machon! Who heard?" In Going for Christs was first
 place in a class of this, undoubtedly, was for for the
 right to have his long upper, so the words found even of
 this road? 'nearly plus goes to Jack Donding Stern for
 his story, 'Half-Centred Blues'! Gladly Graham Inghs
 'Horse' 'Hend' 'A Q!' 'nearly that write Jack Donding
 Kamen follow closely with his 'Return'!"*

Eventually, the wall artists returned to self-parody
 by 1947, perhaps his self-mockery began early, and the
 so it was perpetuated by Gaines and Feldman on
 themselves. In "Horror Beneath the Streets" (Issue of
 #17, Sep. Oct. '50), Al lampooned both Bill and
 himself as they literally descended into hell—in the
 streets of New York. It was another demonstration of
 a spirit of camaraderie mixed with jokes that exuded
 a FC. In "A Lamentable Tale" (also from the Crypt
 #54, Dec. '50-Jan. '51), Jack Davis caricatured Harvey
 Kurtzman as a murderous undertaker who generated
 a own clientele.

While they were on the outside of so much of what
 went on in the adult world, kids loved sharing these inside
 jokes. These puns in print, plus the lush presentation
 of the Crypt keepers' Kamen, reflected a capacity to laugh
 at oneself that intimidated the advent of MAD.

"Kamen's Kalanity" (also from the Crypt #34),
 was an EC insider spoof that showed unscrupulous
 Mr. Nice Guy Jack Kamen finally joining his
 ghoulish colleagues Inghs, Craig, and Davis in
 depravity. Feldman and Gaines also appear in
 the story, which was drawn by Kamen himself.



Davis and Kamen shared a warm personal relationship,
 but Jack's caricature may be an other-in-the-rib, just as
 Harvey's bit-picky perfectionism.

EC's MAD Magazine

MAD was born in 1952—largely because Harvey Kurtzman needed a raise.

In the time that the performance Kurtzman bravely produced his two son comics, Feldman was turning out seven. Because Gaines paid on a per-issue basis, there was a considerable disparity in their income. Inevitably, a rankled Kurtzman, who felt that his parsimonious attention to detail merited further compensation, issue-by-issue, however, *MAD*'s magazines were also bringing in substantially more money than Harvey's. Bill wasn't about to pay more for craftsmanship that wasn't helping the bottom line.

As a means of solving the dilemma he suggested to Kurtzman that he start another magazine. That way, retained Gaines, his income would go up by 50 percent. *MAD* debuted in the summer

Seymour Chwast was the original artwork for *MAD* #1.





FRANK REYNOLDS' "HOOHAAH!" (A) WITH "YOU'D BETTER READ THIS STORY!" FORGOT THE "HOOHAAH!" BOOK SERIES (B) IN 1955. (C) "YES! WELL, BASH IT!" (D) "WELL, BASH IT!" (E) "WELL, BASH IT!" (F) "WELL, BASH IT!" (G) "WELL, BASH IT!" (H) "WELL, BASH IT!" (I) "WELL, BASH IT!" (J) "WELL, BASH IT!" (K) "WELL, BASH IT!" (L) "WELL, BASH IT!" (M) "WELL, BASH IT!" (N) "WELL, BASH IT!" (O) "WELL, BASH IT!" (P) "WELL, BASH IT!" (Q) "WELL, BASH IT!" (R) "WELL, BASH IT!" (S) "WELL, BASH IT!" (T) "WELL, BASH IT!" (U) "WELL, BASH IT!" (V) "WELL, BASH IT!" (W) "WELL, BASH IT!" (X) "WELL, BASH IT!" (Y) "WELL, BASH IT!" (Z) "WELL, BASH IT!"



of 1952. Originally patterned on campus humor magazines, its first targets were other comic books. To prove that humorism started at home, issue #1 skewered EC's own horror comics, which Kurtzman had never really cared for. (Harvey had worked on some of them, but stopped almost as soon as he began editing *Ten-Faced 'Nite*.) Sales of issues #1-5 were, to put it mildly, disappointing. Because he liked what Kurtzman was doing, however, Gaines was willing to stick with it for awhile, losing the profits from the horror magazines carry MAD, even as they carried *Wild Science* and *Wild Fantasy*.

It soon became clear, however, that MAD had no need for a crutch. With Wally Wood's "Superduperman," in issue #4, sales of MAD began to soar; Kurtzman criss up with winking parodies of some of comics' most beloved icons—Mickey Mouse became Mickey Korlen; happy-go-lucky Archie was transmogrified into Starbuck, an innocent-and-dangerous juvenile delinquent; there was Woman Wonder, the Lure Stranger, Poopsey, and all the Melvins—Lark Ophiuch Melvin, Strula Melvin, and Melvin of the Apes. Then he expanded into the world at large, taking on advertising, TV, movies, and one of the key underpinnings of fathers' conservatism, planned obsolescence. There was no cow too sacred for MAD.

Gaines and Feldman provided Kurtzman to broaden his targets beyond EC, first to other comics and then to the world at large. At the same time, however, Kurtzman broad his focus, taking deadly aim at a particular comic or advertisement as representatives of the genre. "Superduperman and Mickey Korlen," he told, are stories that are "engraved on my memory, because they sum up what MAD was all about: trying to make the truth visible."

A Million Kids, a Million Flashlights, Under a Million Blankets

Tales from the Crypt and the horror magazines were a financial and cultural phenomenon. After bedtime a million kids armed with a million flashlights huddled under a million blankets, eagerly devouring each new bimonthly issue. Adolescent boys huddled over shared horror stories. As the *Crypt* Keeper had recommended, they read them aloud to one another. *Crypt*s were passed from hand to hand, if need be in secret.

Bill, Al, and new EC business manager Lyle Stuart at first tried to hide the fact that the horror comics were profitable, but the horrible truth was that they were doing fabulously well.

Issues frequently sold out; there were many letters from readers complaining that they couldn't find the magazines in the stores (they were encouraged to subscribe by mail). "Break even was 36 or 37 percent," recalls Stuart. "Our magazines were coming in at 89 percent—89 percent *seven*! Life wasn't doing that well!" With the cooperation of Games' distributor, Leader News, nobody outside EC knew what the real circulation numbers were, in fact many inside the EC "family" (including the artists) were kept in the dark, for about a year. After that, the news leaked out and everyone wanted a piece of the action.



The Copycat Brigade

Few of the horror knockoff comics had the sense of humor or the sense of ironic justice that made EC stories so distinctive.

Over the financial success of EC's *New Trend* was apparent, all of the other comic book publishers hurried to produce imitations. Comics called them "the copycat brigade." The same learnings who wished to duplicate successful teen comics, romances, and science now jumped into horror, going as close to EC titles as they dared. Avon was one of the first publishers to make the leap with *Strange Worlds* in 1950. Mas came out with *Adventures into Space* (formerly *Jobs*) in 1950, and Alyce, *Atomfunk* (formerly *Marvel Man*), and *Strange Tales* in 1951. ACE began putting out *Forbidden Worlds* in July of that same year. Hiney introduced *Witchy Tales* in January 1954 and *Leader of Clubs* six months later. *Bank of Space* followed in 1955. Also in 1955, Everett debuted *Strange Stories from Another World* and *World of Fear*, and SA published *Amazing True Tales*.

In a continuation of the post office name-change fables (designed to avoid paying for a \$2,600 second-class mail permit) Star turned *Jungle Thrills* into *Stories of the Jungle*, *Agas's Backstairs* became *Strange Fantasy*. The word "sword" began popping up ubiquitously: There was *Ward Error*, *Ward Thriller*, *Ward Blood*, *Ward Horror*, *Ward Adventure*, *Ward Whizzer*, and *Ward Tales of the Future*.

And that was just the beginning. By 1953, approximately one quarter of the comic book industry was following Games into the horror field. By one estimate, there were about 150 hot new titles in print. *Cartoonists* rather than children were in the vanguard. According to one study, 54 percent of the comic book buying public was over twenty-one, and more American adults were reading horror comics than were reading *Reader's Digest* or *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Further into Horror



Looking for the latest horror comic, Gaines has him on hand in volume quantities and the store stocks magazines in huge quantities. He is working daily on his popular comic books, and the store is open daily from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M.



Are you a victim only a hand? Look at the...
 REVEREND AND HIS... THE BELL... THE NEW...
 ... THE BELL... THE NEW...
 ... THE BELL... THE NEW...



From George Evans' over-the-top Whiteman sampler filled with Irvine's fat wife in "An Awful Sample" (*Book of Horror* #32) to the tub full of fresh-caught gross-out fish in "The Fish" (*Tales from the Crypt* #42), an array of off-stage gore began to take center stage.

It took a lot of guts to illustrate my dreadtime gories, but those EC artists were just dying to do it... heh, heh, heh, heh.

Soon the press of competition, plus the cumulative effects of writing four stories a week, began to tell on Gaines and Bekstein. The stress of daily collaboration took its toll on their relationship, and though they were still essential, their friendship cooled. As Bekstein began peeling later and later just to stay in one place, Gaines started to spend much more time with Lyle Sayan.

As enthusiasm set in, Bill and Al began having story problems. With all the imitators, it was now much more difficult to maintain EC's quality and originality, but in his voracious reading, Gaines had already consumed most of the better and more obtuse sources for springboards. As they reached deeper and deeper into the bottom of the springboard barrel, the stories got bloodier and bloodier. In the early series, much of the gore took place "offstage," and more was left to the reader's imagination. With the later tales, however, the unseen tortures deflated and the visible human gibles contra rose warlocks.

Finally Gaines bolstered his help from outside freelance writers in the February 1954 issue of *Book of Horror*:

We give up the five cents up release and I have been writing an average of a comic book every ten days for a month only a year. Each magazine contained four stories. That's 240 plots a year. 1200 in five years. Now we're writing out. How do you...

Gaines went on to specify what kinds of stories he wanted from writers and so doing set down as good a definition of the do's and don'ts of horror, EC-style, as has ever been published:

His advice to writers and the content of his magazines stood in stark contrast to the guidelines his father had published in. In *Tales from the Crypt*, *Book of Horror*, and *House of Fear*, it appeared as if the rebellious Bill had methodically gone out of his way to violate his father's publishing shield—the and to do so in a flamboyant manner as possible. By late 1955, he hadn't missed a one-



AN EXPLODING PAIR WHIPPED THROUGH JORDON'S HOME, HOPELESSLY COVERED WITH THE TAIL-SWELLING, STENCHY COOL, BLOOD-TO-GRAPE.



IT IT'S LIKE... PAPER!
AAAAAAAAGH!

THEY WERE ALSO BURNINGLY PEARLING, SPARKING, UNBURNING LIPS, COVERED WITH BLOOD.



AN EXPLODING PAIR WHIPPED THROUGH JORDON'S HOME, HOPELESSLY COVERED WITH THE TAIL-SWELLING, STENCHY COOL, BLOOD-TO-GRAPE.



IT IT'S FEARING
WOLF LOOSE!



THE END

SHE LOOKED UP AT WALDO WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES.



SEE, SEE? NO WHO A SLIPPER LITTLE
WELL! MURDER! AND AWAY, FORTUNE!
LORDS! WHO? SEE, SEE? I WAS AT A
TOWER! FIGHT, MURDERERS, SEE!
TOWER, SEE, SEE, HEARD.

HOW DO YOU KNOW
I MURDER? A
VAMPIRE? THEY
ALL TALKED I AM.

A VAMPIRE KILLED
ANOTHER VAMPIRE...



WALDO GRINNED,
REVEALING HIS BULGING
LIP-FLESH.

WHY DO YOU THINK I
MURDERED YOU? BECAUSE
I WANTED YOUR
BLOOD... AND MORE.



Bill Gaines' Do's and Don'ts of Horror

We have no ghosts, devils, goblins, or the like
We tolerate vampires and werewolves, if they follow tradition and behave the way respectable vampires and werewolves should.
We love walking corpse stories.
We'll accept the occasional zombie or mummy.
And we relish the *corpus crucis* story.

Note: Content credits are titles of content.



"Never show a coffin, especially with a corpse in it"



"Don't chop the limbs off anybody"



"Never show any body stabbed or shot. Make killings in two panels. In one, the villain approaching with the weapons, in two, the villain leaving the body with the smoking gun. Never show the kill."



"No blood or bloody diggers, no skeletons or skulls"

The Gospel According to Max Gaines

In 1942, the New York World Telegram published an article about violence in comics, headlined "Youngsters Want Blood, Thunder in Their Comics." After complaining that "publishers keep leading death to the kids through villains now pictured as Nazis, Japs [sic] and sundry enemies to society," the article went on to describe the strictures that Max Gaines and Sheldon Meyer, his editor, placed on artists and writers at All-American Comics who worked on *Wonder Woman*, *Flash*, and the other superhero comic magazines.



"Never show an electric chair or a hanging. If you must, do it in silhouette or with the lights dim."



"Don't roast anybody alive"



"Never show a hypodermic needle"



"Don't put anybody's eyes out"



"Show no torture scenes, show no whippings"

A "can you top that?" atmosphere pervaded in the later years of the horror tales, as can be seen in Reed Crandall's "Silly 'Sawage'" (*House of Fear* #27), Dave's retort to "Kosser Amberg's" *Tales from the Crypt* #44, and Craig's apocalyptic ending to "Saraphic Party" (*Sins of Women* #52).



When other writers were brought in to help Feldman write horror stories in the last year, no definitive records were kept of authorship. Jack Oblick, Carl Wesker, and Otto Binder each contributed seven all stories. The material was probably suggested by Gerry Fokkema and certainly edited by Feldman. According to John Reppert, the authorship of the 72 stories in the last six issues of the horror titles has been positively identified for all but 17 stories.

WHILE BEING... BELOW MY GRAVE FLOORING... SPOTTED WITH... THE QUICKNESS OF... POLARIZED AND THROUGH... A LITTLE TRAIN... A MASS OF SHAKING... REACHING SPREAD AND OUTWARD AND BACK BY... STIFF LEGS.



Dead Man's Curve

Despite all the humanity, EC's horror magazines were still the top sellers. Bill Gaines never had to cope with something his father had avoided firm over and over: world events. "I hope to happen — like we're accustomed to something." Like the right thinking that turned into a swan, with the success of the *Vue* *Band*, all those characters that had been considered flaws and defects by his father had become strengths and advantages. Max Gaines had been afraid of Bill just enough jumps into his hand hanging on to a good woman negotiator. Everything else that was passing off — his constant, his own, his practical jokes, his love of time, and his regular hours, his generosity with praise for the efforts of others — was unique to Bill Gaines, who had been troubled from time to time by nightmares about his father was not a success because of what he was, not because of what his father had been. It was as if he had taken the keys to his dad's Hudson Hunter — without permission — stuck it up, pointed Barnes on the road, taken it down to the shop, and gone along with the big boys from uptown. When the smoke cleared, he was head of house with everyone else's pink slips in his back pocket. It was a very long way from Boston, Boston, at the *Shreddy* time to time on the *Car*, but now was sitting and listening, because had not.

A change was in the wind, however, as signs of concern began to be raised in protest to the amount of horror available on the newsstands. As 1954 drew to a close, Bill's Hunter, Barnes and all, was hosted by Dead Man's Curve.



PREMATURE DEATH OF TALES

The Gathering Storm

Even when Max Gaines was still publishing *Topolino* and *Green Lantern*, these were those who maintained that comic books were having a harmful effect on America's youth. In May of 1940 *Chicago Daily News* editor Sterling North proclaimed comic books as a poisonous "obscene growth" and claimed that publishers were "guilty of a cultural slaughter of the innocents."

North's early crusade was reignited by World War II. Whatever momentum he had gained was defused by the fact that comic book publishers, Max Gaines included, criticized their superheroes in the war against fascism. It was difficult to attack the scores of *Thunder*, *Heroes*, and the *Man of Steel* without appearing to be for the Axis and against "Truth, Justice, and the American Way." Once the war was over and the super hero craze had passed its peak, however, public concern about the effect of comics on children resurged.

In a transition that reduced the role of the non-Hollywood comic comics clanked to prominence with the end of the war, such that by 1948 they were by far the most popular type of comic. However, the self-appointed guardians of social morality were much tougher on the comics than they were on the movies. At the same time that investigators looked to see *The Big Boy*, *Kid Congo*, and *The Brownie Movie King*, *Time* critics alleged that comic comics glorified villains and violence. News stories appeared about youths who had committed violent felonies that duplicated crimes they had read about in the

pages. These accounts frequently described the young perpetrators not only as precise delinquents but as "comic book addicts." FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover warned that "Comic books, comics, and newspaper stories combined with anti social and criminal acts, the glorification of un-American vigilante actions, and the dedication of the criminal are extremely dangerous in the hands of the unstable child."

The foundation of the anti-comic books was a psychiatrist named Fredric Wertham. A senior psychiatrist for twenty years with the New York Department of Hospitals and director of the Calogogue Clinic, the first psychiatric clinic in Harlem, Wertham began hammering on comic books as early as 1948, when he realized that the reading of comic books was a common habit among his young maladjusted patients.

By attacking covers such as these, Wertham was able to rally women's groups and religious organizations, notably the Catholic Legion of Decency, to his cause.



Wertham committed one of the classic desecrations of the scientific method.

Since all his budding sociopaths read comics (even as they were going and drank Coca-Cola), he concluded that therefore the comics must be the cause of their deviance. He then generalized his findings to deduce that crime comics were the root cause not just of his patients' troubles, but of America's blossoming incidence of juvenile delinquency (an "increase" more supported by headlines than by statistics).

Wertham then revealed overtime to sell his allegations to the public. He was writing a lot of columns, writing articles in popular magazines, lecturing, and appearing on radio programs. With a genius for garnering headlines that produced the term "scarred face," whatever Wertham was lacking in scientific method he made up for in backlistism and salesmanship. In a clipped Bostonian accent that would reward later generations of Peter Sellers' postural of apocalyptic Dr. Strangelove, he was able to generalize on a grand scale, maintaining that comic book reading was "definitely and completely

harmful and was a direct influencing factor in every single delinquent or disturbed child we studied."

Wertham was certainly correct that horror comics followed in the exploitation of gore. Sex murders, electrocutions, acid baths, live burials, and worse abound in these pages. Many of the images are shocking and horrific, but often the scenes are so extreme, so "over-the-top," that the underlying gross-out humor is obvious. Wertham never dealt with the fact that the stories were almost always presented in a comedic context by both the Ghost Comics and the publisher.



Paradoxically, he alleged that the happy well-adjusted kids who were killing in elementary schools all over suburban were the most at risk. Despite the fact that almost all his experience was in working with children with emotional problems, Wertham contended that it was primarily the normal child who was harmed by crime and horror comics, claiming "the most troubled children are least affected because they are wrapped up in their own fantasies."

His particular target was crime comics, but in Wertham, that covered a lot of ground. He defined "crime comics" as those dealing with "crime, mysteries, detailed descriptions of all kinds of crimes, torture scenes, attempted rape, flagellation, and every imaginable kind of violence." Not surprisingly, Wertham believed that "no covers bearing any sign of crime books are crime comics," and did not distinguish among westerns, detective stories, space comics, and ghost or horror stories, saying, "If a girl is raped, she's raped whether it's on a space ship or a planet. If a man is killed, he's killed whether on Mars or here." Even vaguely clean funny animal comics were not immune. "Dicks shoot atoms, rays and throw 'em to kill rabbits," he complained.

Wertham identified standard but abhorrent themes that he found to be common threads running the night what he defined as "crime comics." These elements included injury to the eye, blood sucking, desecration of the dead, violence against the police,



standing, standing of victims, and tying up of females. Although Wertham generally avoided singing out any comic publication by name, his allegations left little doubt that he had EC in his crosshairs.

Wertham was particularly offended by the treatment of women in comic books. He objected to the way they were portrayed "in a starchy, masculinized way, with emphases on half-bare and exaggerated sex characteristics." Comics, he maintained, were "sexually aggressive in an abnormal way."

When the complaints of Wertham and others first started surfacing, comics publishers made a halfhearted attempt at self-censorship. Founded in 1948, the Association of Comic Magazine Publishers (ACMP) went through the motions of adopting a code, but had a hard time gaining and keeping member publishers. Although EC was one of the founding members, Gaines pulled out in 1950 after Henry Schultz, the Executive Director, had denied the ACMP seal of approval to some of his publications (strikingly, however, Schultz had allowed all of EC's work until that time). "I used to go up to Schultz and yell and scream and pull him and talk him out of almost anything," Gaines recalled. "If you look at my old books with the seal on them you'll see what we could publish with the Association's approval, because Schultz was just getting a shy." Comic book publishers, as always, were guided far more by the demands of the marketplace than by the strictures of the code. By the time of the Bellevue hearings in 1954, only three comic book publishers were still members. Schultz admitted to the senators that the ACMP seal was "meaningless," and that "some pub-

lishers make up their own seal of approval and place them on their comic books."

The 1954 publication of Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* turned up the heat on the issue of comics and juvenile delinquency.

(Note the similarity between Wertham's title and Sterling North's original 1940 exclamation, "slaughter of the innocents") From the fears of nuclear annihilation in the Cold War to advertising products that made domestic anxiety about spotted glassware, bad breath, and waxy yellow buildings, such about the 1950s preyed on people's neuroses. The general public looked for strong, confident leadership, and in their vulnerability sometimes found demagogues instead. From FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to Senator Joseph McCarthy to Dr. Richard Wertham, people who had the confidence of their constituents — however misguided they might be — were held in esteem, at least for a time. With the integrity of physicians and the infallibility of science still too high, and the fact that Wertham contended that his criticisms were based on eight years of "scientific" clinical studies heightened alarm among insecure parents across the country. At the EC shop, Gaines and Feldman may have been working too hard to pay much attention

In matters of sex, EC is relatively innocent of Wertham's claims.

Despite regular appearances by scantily-clad women, there is no nudity and no sexual activity in the pages of

EC. The shapely ladies keep their clothes on (with the rare exception of a two-piece bathing suit), and a passionate embrace in the closet we get to see making. These comics hardly seem to be the "sexually aggressive" publications that Wertham described.



SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT

Fredric Wertham, M. D.

the influence of
comic books on today's youth

Comics historian Les Daniels reports that "research teams have yet to uncover a library copy of *Seduction in an unstimulated condition*. In every case, some of the good Doctor's carefully selected illustrations have been removed by some student of suppression who felt obliged to study it more intimately."

This is the infernal panel of "Road Play" (Issue of Fear #15) in which human bones and entrails are used as sporting equipment. Drawn by Jack Davis, it was transcribed by Wertham as emblematic of what was wrong with comic books. Wertham lifted this and other individual comic book panels out of context to "prove" his points, whether or not the story supported his allegations.

The Weird Science of Dr. Fredric Wertham

Seldom in contemporary history have the bizarre beliefs and quasi-scientific assertions of one twisted physician been accepted at face value by so much of the populace. Dr. Fredric Wertham was a psychiatrist with a mission. Firmly convinced that comic books were largely responsible for juvenile delinquency in America, he began a one-man crusade to eliminate them. He especially singled out horror and crime titles — the life blood and cash cow of EC Comics.

Seduction of the Innocent had a huge impact — akin to Tipper Gore's attack on rap lyrics, and Senator Bob Dole's characterization of certain films as "nightmares of depravity." In one chapter entitled "I Want to Be a Sea Monster," Wertham attempted to prove that comic books were the primary contributing factor to sexual deviance among children.

Wertham declared, "If a boy sees a girl in a comic book being whipped, and the man who does it looks very satisfied and on the last page there is an advertisement of a whip with a hard handle, surely the maximum of temptation is given to the boy at least to have fantasies about these things.... The difference between surreptitious pornographic literature for adults and children's comic books is this: in one it is a question of attracting parents, in the other of making them."

Wertham did not feel constrained to remain within the bounds of his area of expertise. He attacked comic books not just for their content but for their deleterious effect on children's reading habits. Wertham contended that "the balloon print pattern [in comics] makes it harder for children to learn to read from left to right." According to Maria Resedbach in *Completely MAD*, he also found onomatopoeias harmful, and objected to such sound-effects words as "yow, arghh, thunk, blam, glung, and kumuck."

Wertham rejected the now commonly accepted idea that comics are modern fairy tales. He believed that crime comics, with their realistic settings and preoccupation with violent anti-social behavior, adversely affected children because they were unable to distinguish real life from the world of make-believe. On April 21, the same day that Gaines testified before the Senate subcommittee, Wertham warned the legislators, "The children see these things over and over again. They see how women are beaten up, how people are shot and killed, and finally they become, as St. Augustine said, 'unconsciously delighted.'"



Unconsciously delighted ... What big ears you have, Dr. Freud. In delving into Wertham's psyche, Les Daniels in *Comic: A History of Comic Books in America*, has revealed a great deal about Wertham that leads one to suspect that Wertham himself may have derived the same "unconscious delight," the same vicarious thrill from comics that millions of other readers did, but unlike the rest of us, he believed that this thrill was awful.

In a prior work called *The Show of Violence*, Wertham discussed a number of lurid cases of individuals he had examined, people who had either committed homicide before coming under his care or who did so later in life. There was a man who had strangled a ten-year-old girl and then eaten her. When X-rayed, medical teams discovered that he had inserted a total of twenty-seven needles into his scrotum. Another fellow was a sculptor who had garroted a model and her mother, then stabbed their lodger with an ice pick. Before committing these acts, he'd half-succeeded in amputating his own genitals.

The bizarre gruesomeness of the cases far exceeds anything in *Tales from the Crypt*. But the most important facet of *The Show of Violence* is the loving attention to detail that Wertham bestowed on these cases. He went on and on about the sculptor — for a total of 84 pages — in a way that suggests not just "unconscious delight," but perhaps "conscious delight" as well.

Calling comics "the new pornography of violence," his own fears and hang-ups are revealed in some of his more off-the-wall allegations, among them:

- Batman & Robin were a homosexual couple
- Wonder Woman was a lesbian sadist
- Ads for bachelors in comics encourage children to spy on their neighbors

At the time, however, no one was looking too closely at Wertham's own background to find the wellspring of his allegations. In a fearful and uncertain age, it was in a way comforting to parents and politicians that one single source for juvenile delinquency had been "scientifically" identified and could hence be eliminated, especially since no one was blaming *them* for the problem. Comic books were brazenly displayed on the newsstands of every drugstore and corner grocery in the country. All that had to happen was to eliminate the worst of them and clean up the rest. As Wertham said during the Kefauver hearings, "I think Hitler was a beginner compared to the comic book industry ... As long as the crime comic book industry exists in its present form, no American home is safe."



Wertham presumed that the suggestive display of legs, thighs, and garters aroused prurient interest in children, but he also believed kids who read comics were further corrupted by bad grammar.



Wertham claimed that children told him what the man (left) was going to do with that hot pole, and believed that kids would imitate what they read in the comics. He complained, "Children, often with comic books sticking out of their pockets, play maracas, harping, lynching, torture."



The Santa Claus Affair

The first real shot across the EC bow in the censorship battle did not come from Vermont. It came from Holyoke, Massachusetts.

In 1951, in addition to his horror stories, venal one-man-band Al Feltstein was also editing a MAD clone called *Flare*. MAD had already spawned a host of imitators, including *Crazy*, *Unwee*, *Whack*, and *Nate*, put out by other publishers, so Gaines decided to jump on his own handiwork. MAD was "funnier in a jocular vein". *Flare* was "funnier in a varicose vein." The premier issue came out in December 51 (bearing a March '54 publication date—comics were always dated several months in advance), and had a Feltstein cover showing Santa's black boot emerging from the chimney fire, headed straight for an industrial-strength bear trap. A beaming Gaius-faced little boy peeked around the margin, staring at the desecration. The issue featured a Will Elder sendup of Clement Moore's old classic, *The Night Before Christmas*. No one tressed with Moore's doggerel, but Elder's illustrations were decidedly nontraditional. Instead of visions of sug-a-plumz, little tins conjured up images of Martin Monroe, and Jane Russell (and lifetime subscribers to EC Comics.) Dasher, Dancer, Deanna, Blitzen, and the rest of Santa's reindeer appeared in various incarnations as a ballet dancer, a horse, and a sponger. The artwork that seemed to generate the most ire was Elder's unorthodox drawing of Santa's sleigh. A sign reading "Just Dropped" dangled from the steers, a meat cleaver, a garbage can, and two daggers trailed in tow behind.

This sort of parody is the stock-in-trade of much of the contemporary Christmas greeting-card industry today, but in December 1953, some of the more devout folks in Massachusetts were not amused. Where Elder and Feltstein saw the mischief of the commercialized myth of the most sacred season in retailing, the Bay State sacrosanctious believers saw blasphemy and sacrilege. Commercialized or not, Santa Claus was St. Nicholas, and a religious figure was not a proper subject for ribbing. Acting on complaints from the well-connected Patrick J. McDonough of the Governor's Council, Massachusetts



With "The Night Before Christmas," Feltstein and Elder eclipsed Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* was outlawed in the city of Boston. *Flare* was banned on the entire state of Massachusetts.



Attorney General George Fingold moved to prohibit the statewide sale of *Picture Stories from the Bible* on the grounds that it "desecrated Christmas" by depicting the night before Christmas in a "pagan manner."

References to sleighs and reindeer are hard to come by in the Bible, so McDonough's outcry put Fingold on shaky theological ground.

He was on unstable legal ground as well, since the Attorney General could not ban distribution of any publication on his own so-so. Explaining that his trade was meant to encourage voluntary compliance, Fingold then urged retailers to pull the magazine from their shelves. There was sufficient hue and cry among McDonough's supporters that distributors recalled existing copies and sent unopened batches back to New York.

To Bill Gaines, it was as if the guarantee of censorship had been hung down right before him. Acting through his attorney, the very able Martin Scheiman, he struck back in print, telling the *New York Times* that Fingold's action was a "gross insult to the intelligence of the Massachusetts people." Scheiman offered up arguments that rang like a demented version of the courtroom scene in *Miracle on 34th Street*. "Every reasonable adult knows that there just isn't any Santa Claus," he blurted out. He then alleged that Fingold's actions had inflicted "wanton damage" on Gaines, and that it was unthinkable that censors would "come to the rescue of a wholly imaginary, mythological creature rarely believed to exist by children more than a few years old." If anyone found it ironic that the Catholic McDonough and the atheist Gaines were going nose to nose over Kris Kringle through to Jewish lawyers, Fingold and Scheiman, it was never mentioned in the press.

Lyfe Stuart, who replaced Frank Lee as EC's business manager, suggested that Gaines retaliate by pulling all issues of *Picture Stories from the Bible* out of Massachusetts. It was a move borne of frustration, but a few days later Gaines was embarrassed by the revelation that *Picture Stories from the Bible* had not been sold anywhere in Massachusetts since 1948.

The upshot of the Santa Claus Affair in Massachusetts was a copycat wave of complaints in Manhattan, and a visit to EC

offices by the New York Police Department. The officers brought a copy of the same issue of *Picture* from the EC' multivision, then came looking for Gaines. Gaines was shaking so badly that Stuart was afraid he would not bear up well under incarceration. He spirited Bill away in the men's room, then confronted the cops.

"Do you have to arrest the publisher, Officer?" Stuart asked. "How about taking me? I'm the business manager." After the gentlemen got the okay from headquarters (ironically it was the same precinct that had just hooked mobster Frank Costello), Stuart then allowed himself to be taken into custody for selling "disgusting" literature. This time the offending work was apparently not Elder's spoof of Santa Claus, but rather a Feldstein/Davis lampoon of Mickey Spillane called *My Gun Is the Jury*. When the police realized that they hadn't actually purchased the magazine from Stuart himself, they returned to arrest the "wonder," EC's black receptionist, Shirley Norris, who walked all the way to the Elizabeth Street station, laughing and joking with the officers, before Stuart, already in custody, told her she was about to be booked.



Gaines of comic books used *Picture* to "prove" their case. New York Assemblyman James A. Fitzpatrick reads aloud from the first issue at a 1954 hearing on juvenile delinquency.



The prosecutor expressed outrage at the thigh-baked scene in Davis' Spillane spoof, but ignored the violence of the belly-button gun blast.

Stuart's arrest was no laughing matter; he faced a possible year in prison if convicted. Although Gaines remained deeply opposed to censorship throughout his life, he was concerned for the welfare of Stuart. It was when Bill was offered a chance to resolve the case quietly at the judge's chambers, he was tempted to accept. He was forcefully dissuaded by Lyle, who said it would be the end of their friendship. "You know, Bill, if you do this," he threatened, "I'm never going to speak to you again."

Because of the gravity of the charges, technicians seem to count loaded for bear: A very fatigued NYPD officer took the stand and was compelled to identify exactly what it was that was "digging" about Volume 1, Number 1 of *True*. When the embarrassed

Despite the legal victory the Santa Clara Allan and Stuart's arrest lacked up a lot of negative press for EC. The pushouts from PTAs, church groups, mothers' clubs, and Catholic Legion of Decency continued. The New York legislature passed numerous bills outlawing horror comics, only to have Governor Thomas Dewey veto them. Dewey's popularity was not affected.

Reality as the comic book industry had always been fierce. Other publishers reacted to the attacks on Gaines as if just EC's end of the horror comic beat was shaking. Atlas (Marvel), and DC. Comics had been trying to play catchup with EC in the book biz game, but EC, with Feldstein's sophisticated stories and a stable of quality artists, was still the acknowledged sales leader by far.

The Secret Life of Walter Winchell



There is considerable evidence that the New York "red" on EC offices was a put-up job engineered by gossip columnist Walter Winchell. In addition to his duties as EC business manager, Lyle Stuart also edited a monthly tabloid called

Exposé. In 1951 he'd run a story called "The Truth About Walter Winchell," which detailed the seamy side of Winchell's private life and public hypocrisy. Stuart's piece engendered a twenty-four-part series in the *New York Post* (for which Stuart provided the sources), and which apparently prompted Winchell to suffer a nervous breakdown early in 1952. Shortly thereafter, Stuart was hired to write a book called *The Secret Life of Walter Winchell*. The gossip columnist retaliated with scathing attacks on Stuart in print. He also spread the word that friendship with Stuart would be reflected badly in Winchell's column; he was successful to the extent that Stuart found himself a pariah among many of his former friends. Winchell had good connections with the New York Police Department and, although no "smoking gun" exists as proof, it's more than likely that the red was orchestrated at Winchell's behest as one more way of avenging himself on Stuart.



Lyle Stuart's book revealed sordid facets of Winchell's life, disclosures that may have provided a veneer against EC Comics.



Comic #9 (June/July 52) skewered Winchell with "Does Walter Winchell read comics?"

officer nervously singled out a drawing of a woman showing off her legs to the Spallone parents, the judge asked the cop if he'd ever seen anyone ask to be shown. After a few more minutes of interrogation, he turned to the officer and said, "I want you to deliver a message to the police attorney. Tell him that if he ever brings a filing case like this before me again, I'm going to arrest him."

While Gaines and EC were taking a pounding in the media, the other comic book publishers sat on their hands, happy to see a rival brought down. Stuart recalls Gaines' description of this phenomenon: "The only way these guys are happy," Gaines had told him, "is not if they hear that a competitor is dying, but if he's dying yours is likely painfully."

The Kefauver Hearings



The Kefauver hearings became what Comics called "a headline-seeking carnival" that gave "fuel to those in our society who want to stir up the creator's trash."

Connecticut Senator William Purtell called for an investigation of comic books.

His request dovetailed with the efforts of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency and its "star" investigator, Senator Estes Kefauver. Three years earlier, the New York hearings of Kefauver's committee investigating organized crime were broadcast "nationally"—that is, in about twenty cities in the East and Midwest. The confrontation between Kefauver and mobster Frank Costello (who would allow his hands, but not his face, to be shown) gripped the country in much the same way that the Watergate hearings did many years later. Because Costello's nervous hands and tightly clenched fingers belied the bland assurances coming out of his mouth (he was just an ordinary businessman, Kefauver emerged as a national political figure and a viable pres-

idential hopeful). Thus when hearings by Kefauver's committee investigating juvenile delinquency were scheduled for the same New York courthouse in Foley Square, it had all the makings of another media circus, especially since most of the witnesses lined up to speak were known foes of comic books. With Lylo Smead's encouragement, Comics volunteered to appear before the committee. After a parade of witnesses, including Frederic Wertham, had lambasted comics as a bad influence on youth, Comics read a statement he had prepared with Smead, then submitted to questioning from the senators and committee investigators. Bill got no support from other comic book publishers. They were more than content to leaving him twisting in the wind.



Comics were under attack at all levels of government. New York State Assemblyman James Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the State Joint Legislative Committee to Study the Publications of Comics, and New Jersey Senator Robert Hendrickson, Chairman of the Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee, confront "the enemy."

Bill Gaines' Statement to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency

April 12, 1954

My name is William Gaines. I am a graduate of the School of Education of New York University. I have the qualifications to teach in secondary schools — high schools.

What then am I doing before this Committee?

I am a comic magazine publisher. My group is known as EC — Entertaining Children. I am here as a voluntary witness. I asked for and was given this chance to be heard.

Two decades ago, my late father was instrumental in starting the comic magazine industry. He edited the first few issues of the first modern comic magazines, **Famous Funnies**.

My father was proud of the industry he helped found. He was bringing enjoyment to millions of people. The heritage he left, the vast comic book industry employs thousands of writers, artists, engravers, printers. It has raised hundreds of thousands of children from pictures to the printed word. It has stirred their imaginations, given them an outlet for their praise and frustrations — but most important, given them millions of hours of entertainment.

My father before me was proud of the comics he published. My father saw in the comic book a vast field for visual education. He was a pioneer. Sometimes he was ahead of his time.

He published **Picture Stories from Science**, **Picture Stories from World History**, and **Picture Stories from American History**. He published **Picture Stories from the Bible**.

Since 1942, we have sold more than five million copies of **Picture Stories from the Bible** in the United States. These copies are used widely by churches and schools to make religion interesting, more vivid, more real. **Picture Stories from the Bible** is now published throughout the world in dozens of translations. But make no mistake about it, it is nothing more and nothing less than a comic magazine.

I publish many comic magazines in addition to **Picture Stories from the Bible**.

For example, I publish horror comics. I was the first publisher in these United States to publish horror comics. I'm responsible I started them!

Some may not like them. That's a matter of personal taste. It would be just as difficult to explain the barbaric thrill of a horror story to a Dr. Wertham as it would be to explain the subtlety of love to a frigid old maid.

My father was proud of the comics he published, and I'm proud of the comics I publish. We use the best writers, the finest artists. We spare nothing to make each magazine, each story each page a work of art.

As a result, we have the largest percentage of sales in independent distribution.

The comic magazine is one of the few remaining pleasures that a person can buy for a dime today.

Pleasure is what we sell. Entertainment. Reading enjoyment. Entertaining reading has never harmed anyone.

Our American children are, for the most part, normal chil-

dren. They are bright children. But those who want to prohibit comic magazines seem to me instead dirty, twisted, sneaky, vicious, perverted little monsters who use the comics as blue-prints for violence.

What are we afraid of? Are we afraid of our own children? Do we forget that they are citizens too, and entitled to the essential freedom to read?

Or do we think our children so evil, so vicious, so single-minded, that it takes but a comic magazine story of murder to set them to murder — of robbery to set them to robbery?

[Former New York Mayor Jimmy Walker once remarked that he never knew a girl to be ruined by a book.

And no one has ever been ruined by a comic. As has already been pointed out by previous testimony, no healthy normal child has ever been made the worse for reading comic magazines.

I do not believe that anything that has ever been written can make a child hostile, over-aggressive, or delinquent. The roots of such characteristics are much deeper.

The truth is that delinquency is a product of the real environment in which a child lives — and not of the fiction he reads.

Gaines added further remarks to his prepared testimony, a postscript which not surprisingly was not picked up by the local papers.

I would like to add something based on what I have heard here today.

No one has to buy a comic book to read horror stories. Anyone, any child, any adult — can find much more extreme descriptions of violence in the daily newspaper.

In today's edition of the **Daily News** — which more children will have access to than they will to any comic magazine — there are headlines and stories like these:

WAGES TO FIND HE HAS KILLED WIFE WITH GUN . . .

GIFFS FLEW IN COCKTAIL PERFORMANCE — a 30 year old

juke who reads poetry but not comic magazines pleaded guilty to second degree murder. He helped poison the mother and father of a friend.

I'm not saying it's wrong. But when you attack comics when you talk about teaching them as they do in some states, you are only a step away from banning crime news in the newspapers.

(In America) we print our crime news. We don't think that crime news or any news should be banned because it is "bad for the children."

Once you start to censor you must censor everything. You must censor comic books. And magazines. And radio and television and newspapers. Then you must censor what people may say.

And then you have turned this country into a Spain (or France) of that time by Franco dictator Generalissimo Francisco Franco or a Russia.

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
TRADITION!



Kefauver vs. Gaines, or The Affair of the Severed Head

The exchange during the Foley Square hearings between Bill Gates and presidential wannabe Senator Lister Kefauver (D-Tennessee)—with interjections by “Bo Barbara” (Twaddle Doo/Twaddle Dee Senate Subcommittee investigators Herbert Bruer and Herbert Hancock)—has become legendary in the annals of comic book history. It is an archetypal interchange between an advocate of free speech and a politician seeking to capitalize on the hot topics of the hour to further his own ambitions.

Mr. Bauer: Is there any limit you can think of that you could not put in a magazine just because you thought a child should not see or read about it?

Mr. Gates: No, I wouldn't say that there is any limit for the reason you qualified. My only limits are the bounds of good taste, and I consider good taste.

Mr. Bauer: Then you think a child cannot in any way, in any age group, or manner, be hurt by anything that a child reads or sees?

Mr. Gates: I don't believe so.

Mr. Bauer: There would be no limit actually to what you put in the magazine?

Mr. Gates: Only within the bounds of good taste.

Mr. Bauer: Your own good taste and sensibility?

Mr. Kefauver: Yes.

Sen. Kefauver (holding up magazine) Here is your May 22 issue. This seems to be a man with a bloody ax holding a woman's head up which has been severed from her body. Do you think that is in good taste?

Mr. Gates: Yes, sir; I do, for the cover of a horror comic. A cover in bad taste, for example, might be defined as holding the head a little higher so that the neck could be seen dripping blood from it and moving the body over a little further so that the neck of the body could be seen to be bloody (see postscript, below).

Sen. Kefauver: You have blood coming out of her mouth.

Mr. Gates: A little.

Sen. Kefauver: Here is blood on the ax. I think most adults are shocked by that. Here is the July issue. It seems to be a man with a woman in a boat and he is choking her to death here with a crowbar. Is that in good taste?

Mr. Gates: I think so.

Mr. Hancock: How could it be worse?



POSTSCRIPT

In one of Bill Gates' later interviews (with Steve Rosenberg in *Sensational* in 1994), Gates revealed one small insight about the Johnny Craig severed head cover that had generated so much controversy: "What Kefauver didn't know, and I did know, was that when Craig originally brought that cover in, there was blood dripping from the neck. I myself had suggested that he raise the bottom of the cover up to cover the neck, so the neck was out of view before it was shredded. When Kefauver asked, do I think it's in bad taste, knowing what it had been originally, I said, 'No, this is in good taste.'"

Aftermath

"When Kefauver died, I said no prayers for him. I hope they have a pit in hell hot enough for him. Everybody remembers what a bastard McCarthy was, and nobody remembers what a bastard Kefauver was. Well, maybe it's just as well. Nobody should remember him."

—George Evans

AT EC offices, opinion was divided about how well Gaines' statements had gone over. Lyle Stuart felt he'd done just fine. "I thought he read his statement very well. He was very sincere, he thought he'd delivered a good anticensorship appeal."

Al Feldstein was somewhat more pessimistic. "Bill wasn't ready for this," he says. "He wasn't as sharp as he could have been. When they got into the issue of the 95 and the seizure heard, Senator Kefauver really tripped him."

Gaines himself admitted that he'd been taking diet pills during the hearings, and that nausea through the session day began to wear off. "Something keeps you happy, but when it wears off it leaves you like a limp rag," Gaines told Mark Weger. "Halfway through, it wore off and I sat there like a punch-drunk fighter, getting paraded."

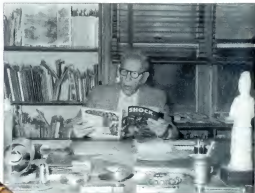
Feldstein also thinks that Gaines may have been affected by something much deeper in his personality. A piece of the rebellious little boy who defied his father, Max, never really left Bill. In the early days after he took control of EC following his father's death, he used to have nightmares. In them, Max would appear before him

and demand that his son return "his" business to its rightful owner. Feldstein believes that at the hearings, Bill may again have been troubled by visions of his father.

"I think Bill saw his father standing there talking to him, telling him what a bad boy he was for doing all those terrible things."

The televised Senate hearings demonstrated the burgeoning power of the fledgling medium to shape public opinion. The press was in a frenzy and powerful forces were brought to bear on the whistleblowers who were distributing comic books. Professors and boycotts were staged across the country, and grandstanding politicians jumped on the bandwagon. There were public burnings of comic books, which reminded many of New York's book burnings before the Second World War. Municipalities were attempting to ban sales of comic and horror comics. Even New York's mayor Robert Wagner asked his Die to ban them under obscenity laws. As Gaines had foreseen, however, some officials were rebuffing, fearing that the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe would be outlawed together with *Tales from the Crypt*.

And whatever happened to Fredric Wertham? He opens his declining years denying that his work had been the impetus for the decline of comic books. "I've got a delightful picture of him making a copy of *Sinful Superheroes*," chortled Gaines in one of his last interviews. "When he died, it went up on the wall at MAD."



Through it all, bundles of EC comics were being returned to the office, unsopened. Gaines was having trouble finding wholesalers who would carry them.

Gaines had always believed that the horror genre, like the superhero genre before it, would die of natural causes, declining in popularity as kids moved onto the next new craze. It was not to be. *Tales from the Crypt* and its siblings had become the lightning rod for the entire comic book industry. At social events, Orlando, Davis, Chang, and many of the other artists began describing themselves as "commercial illustrators."



Judge Charles Murphy, with "before" unsavory comic and new improved "after" version. Murphy wielded a \$100,000 budget and took his mandate to "clean up" comics seriously.

EC comics had literally become too hot to handle.



In 1954, confessing that one drew horror comics for a living was only marginally more socially acceptable than confessing that one was a Communist or a full-time pornographer.

Realizing that his business was on the line, Gaines tried to raise his fellow publishers to defend their medium. In an effort to quell the steam, Gaines proposed a new comic publishers association to fight censorship. It was his intention that they fund an independent study conducted by educators and psychologists to determine once and for all whether there really was any connection between comics and delinquency. He was also prepared to propose a concerted public relations counterattack to reassure parents that comics were not harmful to their children.



The New Association and the New Comic Code

Representatives of eight other publishing houses showed up at the meeting Gaines called, and the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA) was formed. As their first act they banned the use of the words "crime," "horror," and "terror" in comics. Even "weird" got the ax. "This isn't what I had in mind," said Gaines, so he turned on his heel and stomped out of the meeting.

John Goldwater, the publisher of *Archie* comics, became CMAA president, a sealure he held for the next twenty-two years. Jack Liebowitz of DC Comics, Miss Gaines' former partner-curriculum-advisory, became vice president. Shortly thereafter, the CMAA instituted a censorship process that required a seal of approval for all comics before distribution. At Goldwater's suggestion, the publishers recycled former ADMP legal counsel Henry Schultz to draft a Code of Ethics. Those complying with the code would receive the CMAA seal of approval. Both advertising and editorial matter were to be subjected to scrutiny by the censors. The Code forbade "all scenes of horror; excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism, and masochism," as well as the "walking dead, torture, vampires, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfsim." Judge Charles F. Murphy became the first Code Administrator — in effect the comics czar. Murphy was not the first choice. The czar's chair was initially offered to Fredric Wertham.

Bowing to the Inevitable

Gaines was disgusted and his business was in ruins. On September 14, 1954, he reluctantly announced that he would cease publication of his five horror and crime comics.

Gaines' disillusionment with the new CMAA was complete when he realized that there was a double standard (and not inconsiderable double-dealing) involved. It had been clear when the CMAA was founded and the Code was established that all crime and horror would be verboten. However, the Code as adopted permitted the word



"crime" in a comic title, provided that the word was used "with restraint." Gaines pulled out of the CMAA as he had from the ACMP, its predecessor.

"Naturally, with comic magazine censorship now a fact, we at EC look forward to an immediate drop in the crime and juvenile delinquency rate in the United States. We trust there will be fewer robberies, fewer murders, and fewer rapes!"

— Bill Gaines

The New Direction

To save his company, Gaines had killed off his favorite "children," his horror comics. In their stead he and Feldheim developed a new "clean, clean" line. EC's *New Direction* comics, including *Ace High*, *Anger*, *Prosy*, *Nick*, *Extra!*, *MD*, and *Psychanalysis*, debuted in January 1955. Even though Gaines was no longer a CMAA member, the comics met the letter of the code. However, because these comics did not carry the CMAA seal, they too were returned unopened by the distributors.

With revenues plummeting, Gaines was forced by economic necessity to swallow his pride and report the CMAA. Gaines stayed with the CMAA for about ten months, reluctantly submitting his publications to Murphy and his staff. He didn't have a great deal of respect for the CMAA or the people who ran it, and his contempt for the process was more than likely ill-disguised. "This is what our two fathers came to America to escape," he wrote to his distributors. His position did not waver over time.

"I've never believed in any kind of censorship against anything in any way for anybody nohow,"

he told Steve Bingenberg in a 1992 *Gametrail* interview. "The Comics Code group was run by three or four old ladies who were shocked by almost anything," he continued. "Murphy headed it, but I don't think he read anything. This sort of old ladies read everything and it wasn't hard to shock them."

During the months that Gaines tried to behave himself and remain in the CMAA, Judge Murphy's "lady old ladies" excoriated every EC story they scintillated. Even with the censor's seal, however, unopened bundles of *New Direction* comics were still being returned. It was apparent that EC was being blackballed by the rest of the comic book industry. With the Code seal or without it, *Ace High*, *Prosy*, *Nick*, *Extra!*, *MD*, and *Psychanalysis* lumbered toward failure throughout 1955. They failed in part not because readers rejected them but because the EC boycott was so pervasive that they were never given a fair chance to hold their own in the marketplace.





Here Comes the Judge

One famous instance of censorship involved an issue of *Amazing Science Fiction* (formerly *What Science Fiction?*), and a particular story called "Judgment Day." The story was one of Feldstein's "preaches," an allegory about a planet populated by orange robots and blue robots, and the space galaxy investigator who came to see if they were advanced enough to join the galactic empire. After determining that the blues and oranges had not sufficiently progressed an ending prejudice between them, the investigator returned to his space ship. Once inside, he removed his helmet, revealing himself to be a man with distinctly African features. This proved that although the orange and blue robots were still trapped in their biases, the great galactic empire had achieved equality and harmony and was now one people. On the man's brow, some drops of perspiration glistened like the stars outside in deep space.

JUDGMENT DAY

This really made 'em go bananas in the Code czar's office. "Judge Murphy was off his nut. He was really out to get us," recalls Feldstein. "I went in there with this story and Murphy says, 'It can't be a black man.' But...but that's the whole point of the story!" Feldstein spluttered.

When Murphy continued to insist that the black man had to go, Feldstein put it on the line. "Listen," he told Murphy, "you've been taking us and making it impossible to put out anything at all because you guys just want us out of business."

Al repeated the results of his audience with the can- to-Games, who was furious. Al immediately picked up the phone and called Murphy. "This is ridiculous," he bellowed. "I'm going to call a press conference on this. You have no grounds, no bias, to do this. I'll sue you."

Murphy made what he surely thought was a gracious concession. "All right. Just take off the heads of sweat."

At that, Gaines and Feldstein both went ballistic. "Fuck you!" they shouted into the telephone in unison. Murphy hung up on them, but the story ran in its original form.

In Feldstein it was just the latest example of the petty vindictiveness and cutthroat competition in the comic book industry. "I finally believe that the *Archie* crowd and the DC crowd wanted in out of business because our sales were great and we were very innovative," he says emphatically. "Even though we weren't doing better anymore, they didn't know when else we'd come up with next so they wanted us gone."

Recent statements by longtime CMAA president and *Archie* executive John Goldwater certainly suggest that Feldstein's suspicions are well founded. In 1992, Goldwater looked back on his years as *Archie's* publisher in an excerpt from *My Life with Archie: The Comic Book and History of the Comics* and recalled the beginning of the CMAA

"Judgment Day" was substituted for another story which Murphy had already rejected. Gaines may have felt empowered to challenge him because *Amazing Science Fiction* #33 was EC's last color comic.



code. . . . Those of us in the industry saw these trends—both the publication of the offensive comic books and the reaction—as a threat to everything we had worked so hard to create. Lord knows the themes and content of these comics were totally antithetical to the themes and content of the *Archie* series. . . . We had certain moral obligations to guarantee that comic books are reasonably acceptable to reasonable people. . . . I doubt that we could have made a finer choice than that of Judge Charles F. Murphy [as Code Administrator]. He performed an outstanding service to all parties concerned with comic magazines.

"Admitted to everything—totally antithetical—moral obligations to guarantee that 'comic books are reasonably acceptable to reasonable people' . . ." Goldwater's words were all but a declaration of war on everything that Gaines stood for. Virtually from that point forward, every criminal Gaines entered into had a clause custom-designed for him by his attorneys, Marty Scherman and Jack Albert. "This agreement is not subject to the criterion of reasonableness." Henceforth from a legal standpoint Gaines could be as crazy as he wanted to and get away with it—it was right there in black and white.

Editorial statement which appeared in the last issue of the five horror and crime comic titles

HORROR COMICS: IN MEMORIAM

You may never read this magazine. For that matter, this magazine may never be printed. If it is printed, it may never be distributed. If it is distributed, it may be kept in a bundle behind the counter and never see the light of day. But if, through some miracle, it does reach the newsstand, this will probably be the last issue of this magazine you will ever read.

As a result of the hysterical, injudicious, and unfounded charges leveled at crime and horror comics, many retailers and wholesalers throughout the country have been intimidated into refusing to handle the type of magazine.

Although we at EC still believe, as we have in the past, that the charges against horror and crime comics are utter nonsense, there's no point in going into a defense of this kind of literature at the present time. Economically our situation is acute. Magazines that do not get onto the newsstand do not sell. We are forced to capitulate. We give up. WE'VE HAD IT!

Naturally, with comic magazine censorship now a fact, we at EC look forward to an immediate drop in the crime and juvenile delinquency rate of the United States. We trust there will be fewer robberies, fewer murders, and fewer rapes!

We would like to say in passing, passing away that is, that if you have enjoyed reading EC's horror and crime efforts over the past five years half as much as we have truly enjoyed creating them for you, then our labors of love have not been in vain.

But enough mush! This is not only an obituary notice; it is a birth announcement! BOY, WHAT WE GOT IN STORE FOR YOU! (Ya didn't think EC was gonna do with the books did ya? We got talent we ain't even used yet!)

EC is planning the NEW NEW TREND. In January of 1955, we hit! In fact, we hit with five (5) sensational new titles. They won't be horror magazines. . . they won't be crime magazines! They'll be utterly new and different—but in the old reliable EC tradition! Naturally, we can't tell you what they'll be YET. We can feel the hot breath of our fiercest competing competitors who followed us into horror on our necks. When the mags are ready to go, they'll be announced in MAD, PANIC, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY, PIRACY, and TWO-FISTED TALES!

We feel it's gonna be a HAPPY NEW YEAR with our NEW NEW TREND!

Your grateful editors

And Then There Was One

With the failure of Gaines' *New Discoveries*, the world had finally been made safe for *Archie*. There was only one profitable piece of Gaines empire still standing: *MAD* magazine.



CORPSES & COVERS

Covers sell comics. News racks were overflowing with comic books in the early 1950s, and it took a strong graphic image to make a comic grab a kid's attention amidst the jumble of competing titles. A cover had to stand alone, usually without caption, sort of a mute single-frame snapshot of one of the stories in the issue.

At EC, the cover artwork was not necessarily drawn by the same artist who drew the story inside the comic. Thus fans were sometimes treated to different visions of the same tales. On the cover of *Shock Suspense Stories* #13, Jack Kamen captured the frozen terror of a young woman thrown from a roller coaster who has not yet hit the ground, but science fiction master Frank Frazetta drew the story, "Squeeze Play." Wally Wood showed the shocked reaction of spectators to a guillotine in action on the cover of *Tales from the Crypt* #27. The story, entitled "Horror! Head...It Off!" was drawn by Ghastly Graham Ingels.

Jack Davis' covers had a funhouse macabre feeling to them, a grisly glee that was perfectly attuned to the mood set by the GhoulLunatics. Al Feldstein said he "never really cared" for own artwork, but thought it "worked pretty well on covers," which is quite an understatement. With great economy of style, he repeatedly came up with dramatic cover images that are still riveting today.

These freeze frames often convey horror, not at what has already happened, but helplessness at what is about to occur. Alternatively, they show clandestine activity observed, a secret as yet unrevealed. These kinds of drawings were what made readers plunk down their dimes for EC comics — because they couldn't wait to see what happened next.





1960







THE VAULT OF HORROR



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



THE HAUNT OF FEAR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



THE HAUNT OF FEAR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES





THE VAULT OF HORROR



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES



THE HAUNT OF FEAR



THE VAULT OF HORROR



TALES FROM THE CRYPT



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES



THE HAUNT OF FEAR



THE VAULT OF HORROR





1953



TALES FROM THE CRYPT
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO
THE HAUNT OF FEAR



THE VAULT OF HORROR
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



TALES FROM THE CRYPT
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



THE HAUNT OF FEAR
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



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TALES FROM THE CRYPT
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO



THE HAUNT OF FEAR
NOW AND DARE THAT WILL SCARE YOU INTO









EC published three volumes of collected favorites entitled *Tales of Error*.



FOUR FOUL TALES

Whether it is for their artwork or their storyline, many stories in EC's *New Trend* are considered "classics." The four included in this section all display a strong story mixed with dynamic illustration, plus a little something extra that enhances their historic interest.

"Lower Berth," the tongue-in-cheek tale of the origin of the Crypt Keeper, is an excellent example of the synergy between Feldstein's stories and Jack Davis' masterful illustration (*Tales from the Crypt* #33). The story culminates in the birth of the infant Crypt Keeper.

When the crush of his editorial and writing duties started to overwhelm him, Al Feldstein reluctantly retired from illustrating stories.

"The Thing from the Grave" (*Tales from the Crypt* #22), is an early Feldstein story from the sixth issue of *Tales* (and the first to use all three Ghoularamics on the cover). It reveals his exemplary use of stark contrast between light and shadow, and highlights his ability to render a moment of horror frozen in time.

"Horror We? How's Bayou?", illustrated by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels, is the quintessential "dripping" story (*House of Fear* #17), and a long-time favorite of EC Fan-Addicts. (Attendees at the 1972 Convention voted it best horror artwork in an individual story.) The title confuses many, especially those who are unaware that it spoofs "How's by you?", a vintage New York salutation.

In "The October Game," Jack Kamen illustrated one of Feldstein's finest adaptations of a Ray Bradbury story (*Shock SuspenStories* #9). Kamen captured the mood flawlessly, with its innocent spooky Halloween patina overlaid on a deadly tale of marital discord and retribution. "The October Game" also accentuates Kamen's prowess at portraying horror without gore or bloodshed, a powerful skill that became his trademark.





TALES



NO. 33
DEC. - JAN.

10¢



FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD MAN



ENOCH



ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZODSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MIKHAI BULCHENK - SKOVTORSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...



...SO THEY CAME AND CRASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR DREAM...



...AND BEING POOR, HELD THE NEXT MORNING!



- HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN **STILL** PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE GULF. WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR, FIRST, NOT YET...
- BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR...WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT SEEM THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR **THEM!** THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR **YOU!**
- THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT **COMIC BOOKS** AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS **NO COMIC BOOKS** OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING... AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN WISE.
- BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

- WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDING! **HERE! READ THIS!**

THE COMMUNIST "DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 13, 1953 ATTEMPTED THE ROLE OF:

"SO-CALLED 'COMICS' IN BRITANNIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN FORMA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

THE ARTICLE ALSO QUOTED **BERNARD LEBMAN** (WHO CLAIMS TO BE A GOOD WRITER FOR **THE PROGRESSIVE**), THE AUTHOR OF A RECENT 38000 AGAINST COMICS PUBLISHED IN "THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL". THIS SAME B. LEBMAN, IN ISSUE #3 OF "PROGRESSIVE" PUBLISHED IN APRIL 1948, HAD JUST CONDEMNED COMICS, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT:

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DRENCH HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS. THIS WILL Siphon OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND PREVENT REVOLUTION."

- SO THE NEXT TIME SOME JOKER GETS UP AT A P.T.A. MEETING, OR SEATS JABBERING ABOUT THE "HAUGHTY COMIC BOOKS" AT YOUR LOCAL CANDY STORE, GIVE HIM THE **GRACE-OVER**. WE'RE NOT SAYING HE IS A COMMUNIST! HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE WHOLE THING! HE MAY BE A **DUPE!** HE MAY NOT EVEN READ THE "DAILY WORKER"! IT'S JUST THAT HE'S **SWALLOWED THE BAIT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER!**

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WENHEI! GOT A COLLECTOR'S ITEM FOR YOU FENDS! GOT A REAL GREAT CHILLER-DILLER! GIVE THE MAN YOUR GRIMY LITTLE DIME IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, AND COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY WITH ANOTHER OF MY TALES OF HORROR! SO SIT DOWN ON THE BARBARA FLOOR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING FARN I CALL...

**LOWER
BERTH!**

LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF RADIO, MOVIES, TELEVISION AND COMIC BOOKS, THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT FOLKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ENJOYED WERE THE TRAVELING CARNIVALS, WHICH SET UP THEIR DAILY COLORED TENTS ON VACANT TRACTS OF LAND AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWNS! ABOUT 90 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THESE CARNIVALS CAME TO A SMALL TOWN IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS...

RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS!
SEE THE **SIDE-SHOW!** SEE
THE **GREATEST COLLECTION**
OF **ODDITIES EVER TO BE**
ASSEMBLED UNDER ONE
TENT! RIGHT THIS WAY,
FOLKS!



THE SIDE SHOW OF THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL WAS OWNED BY A MAN NAMED ERNEST FEELEY. PATIENTLY, OVER THE YEARS, HE HAD ASSEMBLED A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF GODDIES AND FREAKS. HE HAD THE USUAL ATTRACTIONS...

SEE FANNY, THE FAT LADY. FOLKS! FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS OF FEMALE PULCHRITUDE! SEE HADBAR, THE SWORD-SWALLOWER... SKULL-FACE, THE LIVING SKELETON... FEGG, THE FIRE-EATER...



BUT ERNEST FEELEY HAD ONE ATTRACTION... A HEAD-LINE ATTRACTION. THAT NEVER FAILED TO DRAW THE CROWDS... TO SEPARATE THE CURIOUS FROM THEIR QUARTERS...

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, FOLKS... THE STAR ATTRACTION OF FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW... THE MOST UNUSUAL ODDITY EVER TO BE PUT ON DISPLAY ANYWHERE... ANYTIME! INSIDE... IN ITS ORIGINAL SARCOPHAGUS IS MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN EXISTENCE! TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, FOLKS! RIGHT THIS WAY...



MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WAS OWNED BY ZACHARY CLING, A RETIRED ARCHEOLOGIST. ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING A VERY LARGE SALARY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF EXHIBITING MYRNA...

...AND NOW, FOLKS... IF YOU WILL STEP THIS WAY... DOCTOR CLING, WHO FOUND MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT HER AND SHOW HER TO YOU...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, ZACHARY CLING WOULD NARRATE HOW HE DISCOVERED MYRNA, AND THEN SHOW HER TO THE HAPPY CUSTOMERS. HE'D EVEN SING PART OF HIS *WAGGLES*...

MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN AMERICA WAS FOUND IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS BY MY EXPEDITION. HER TOMB WAS DEEP IN THE CLIFFS THAT TOWER OVER THE NILE RIVER...



"ON THE TOMB WALLS, WE FOUND THE INSCRIPTIONS DESCRIBING HER INCARCERATION. IT SEEMS THAT MYRNA, OR MYRANAH, AS THE EGYPTIANS CALLED HER, WAS A LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE PHAROAH'S WIFE..."

BRING ME MY PERFWUM, MYRANAH! YES, MISTRESS!



"MYRANAH WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL, AND SOON CAUGHT THE PHAROAH'S FANCY! BUT LOYAL MYRANAH, FAITHFUL TO HER MISTRESS, REPELLED THE PHAROAH'S ADVANCES..."

DO NOT STRUGGLE, MY PET! I AM YOUR KING! YOU MUST DO AS I WISH!
NO! NO! I WILL NOT! NEVER! NEVER!



"THE PHAROAH, IN ANGER, ORDERED THAT SHE BE BURIED ALIVE AS PUNISHMENT! MYRANAH WAS FORCED WATCHED IN THE CEREMONIAL BURIAL WINDINGS..."

SHE FIGHTS LIKE A CAT, SIRE! SHE WILL FIGHT NO MORE FURRY! EEEWWWWW!



AND SO, FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, THIS POOR GUY LAY IN HIS TOMBS UNTIL I UNCOVERED HER! AND NOW... I GAVE YOU...



MYRNA!

GASP!

SHOKE!



THE MUMIFIED BODY OF THE UNFORTUNATE SEVENTH GIRL STOOD IN ITS SANDWICHES, ITS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS ITS CHEST! THE CARNIVAL CUSTOMERS NEVER FAILED TO GASP AND SCREAM WHENEVER DOCTOR GLING WOULD UNCOVER IT.

AND NOW I WILL REMOVE SOME OF THE WRAPPINGS!



IF THE SIGHT OF THE MUMMY WAS REVOLTING, HER UNWRAPPED FACE WAS EVEN MORE SO! THE WRINKLED DRIED FLESH CLUNG TO HER SKULL LIKE WET TISSUE PAPER! HER EYES HAD RECESSED DEEPLY INTO THEIR SOCKETS! LIPS WERE DRAWN TIGHTLY BACK IN A LEERING GRIN! SOME CRIED OUT... SOME TURNED AWAY!



GOOD LORD!

BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE! THE NEXT NIGHT! MORE OF THE CURIOUS! WORD TRAVELED FAST IN SMALL TOWNS! THEY FLOCKED TO SEE MYRNA... SHE WELL EARNED HER KEEP! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY GLING HIS SALARY HAPPILY! AND THEN, WHEN THE CARNIVAL HIT THAT SMALL DEAR TOWN...

YOU MR. FEELEY! MY NAME'S JED SICKLES! I UNDERSTAN! YOU OWN THIS HERE SIDE-SHOW, MR. FEELEY! I THINK MEBBE YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN WHAT I GOT!

WHAT'S THAT, MR. SICKLES?



I'M THE BOSS 'ROUND THESE PARTS, MR. FEELEY! AINT GOT NO LICENSE OR NUTHIN', BUT FOLKS LIKE WHAT I DO FOR 'EM SO THEY COME T'ME! 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HERE GROWN! CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS! ID NEVER LAID EYES ON 'ER A'FORE! SHE BEGGED ME T'COME BACK WITH HER...

LOOK, MR. SICKLES! I'M A BUSY MAN! GET TO THE POINT! WHAT IS IT YOU'VE GOT THAT I'D BE INTERESTED IN?

I'LL SET TO IT, MR. FEELEY! TAKE IT EASY! ANYWAY, THIS OLD GROWN BEGGED ME SO BAD I WENT! SHE TOL' ME HER SON WAS SICK... TERRIBLE SICK! SHE SAID HE WAS A-DYIN'! SHE TOOK ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO THIS HERE CAVE! I NEARLY THROW'D UP AT WHAT I SAW!

WHAT WAS IT, MR. SICKLES?



IT WAS HER SON, MR. FEELEY!
HER SON HAD TWO HEADS! IT WAS
HORRIBLE...

CHOKED!

KIM YUH...
KIN YUH DO
ANYTHING
FOR ENOUGH?

HE WAS TOO FAR GONE FOR ME
T'SAVE! HE DIED 'BOUT AN HOUR
AFTER WE GOT T' THE GAVE...

I'M SORRY, MAM!
I DONE ALL I
COULD! ENOUGH
IS DEAD!

TAKE 'EM
AWAY! TAKE
'EM... SO...
OUT OF MY
SIGHT!

HE MUSTA BEEN FREAMY!
AND TWO, MR. FEELEY! I TOOK
HIS BODY BACK DOWN
THE MOUNTAIN AND PUT
IT IN A MOONSHINE
STILL! I DIDN'T
WAN' NOBODY T'
SEE IT!

AND YOU
STILL
HAVE IT
THE TWO-
HEADED
BODY?

IT'S BEEN IN THE STILL
FOR TWO YEARS, MR.
FEELEY! THE MOONSHINE
SEEMS THINE 'FRESHENED
IT! YOU...

TAKE ME TO IT!
QUICKLY!

MR. FEELEY AND THE QUACK DOCTOR PUSHED THEIR
WAY THROUGH THE CROWD GOING AT MYUNA, THE
MUMMY! OUTSIDE THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS, A HORSE AND
WAGON WAITED! THEY DROVE TO A HIDDEN STILL...

THAT SHE
IS, MR.
FEELEY?

O' MAM!

THE LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN CAST AN ORANGE GLOW
INTO THE HUGE WOODEN STILL... VIT! BELOW THE SUR-
FACE OF THE MOONSHINE, THE PULPY WHITE FACES
OF THE TWO-HEADED CORPSE STARED UP AT ERNEST
FEELEY...

THAT'S HIM...

GULP!

ERNEST TURNED TO JEB SICKLES, HIS EYES WIDE HIS
FACE FLUSHED...

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN
MY SHOW, JES' DOO WHAT OLD
DOC GLING DOES! EXHIBIT
THIS HERE ENOUGH! TELL HOW
YOU GOT HIM! I'LL PAY YOU
A GOOD SALARY!

JOIN UP WITH
YOU FELLERS,
EN? WAI, I
DUNNO! C. I
GUESS TO
LIKE THAT!

SO, JEB SICKLES TOOK HIS TWO-HEADED PRESERVED BODY OUT OF THE STILL AND JOINED ERNEST FEELY'S SIDE-SHOW! ENOCH WAS PLACED IN A SPECIALLY MADE GLASS TANK FILLED WITH FORMAL-DEHYDE, AND PUT ON EXHIBIT...



AND NOW FOLKS, I GIVE YOU DOCTOR JEBSON SICKLES... AND ENOCH!

FOLKS! I DISCOVERED ENOCH IN THE CAVE OF AN OLD MOUNTAIN CRONE BACK IN THE DEARKS! HE DIED IN MY ARMS...

WHEN JEB DREW BACK THE CURTAIN REVEALING THE PASTY-SKINNED SLOATED TWO-HEADED CORPSE OF ENOCH, THE SIDE-SHOW CUSTOMERS WOULD GASP! AND SHUDDER IN REVOLUTION...



AND NOW, I GIVE YOU... ENOCH! THE TWO-HEADED MAN!

GHORE! GHAP! COUGH

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ERNEST FEELY TO REALIZE THAT THE BODY IN THE HUGE GLASS TANK WAS REALLY VALUABLE EXHIBIT AND DESERVED STAR BILLING, LIKE MYRNA...



THAT'S RIGHT, JEB! I'M GIVIN' YOU UP TO STAR ATTRACTION! YOU'LL MAKE IT WITH BIG CLING, HONEY!

THANKS, MR. FEELY!

SO ENOCH WAS PLACED OPPOSITE MYRNA... AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, JEB SICKLES AND ZACH CLING EXHIBITED THEIR ODDITIES TO THE CURIOUS WHO'D PAY THEIR QUARTERS TO SEE THEM.



MYRNA...

... ENOCH ...

FIVE TIMES A DAY, MYRNA'S ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM HER MUMMIFIED FACE...



GASP! ... GHORE...

AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, THE CURTAIN HUNG ENOCH'S TANK WAS WITHDRAWN REVEALING THE TWISTING, TURNING PRESERVED CORPSE...



AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, AS THE CROWD OOLED AND GASPED... PASTY-SKINNED, TWO-HEADED ENOCH, FLOATING IN HIS FORMAL-DEHYDE WORLD, STARED WITH GLAZED EYES AT THE PUTRID, MUMMIFIED, UNWRAPPED FACE OF MYRNA, THE MUMMY...



THE CARNIVAL MOVED ON FROM TOWN TO TOWN TO TOWN. THE CROWDS FLOCKED TO SEE ENOCH AND MYRNA! AND JEALOUSY BETWEEN ZACH CLING AND JED SICKLES FLAMED....

WHAT'D YOU MEAN YOU'RE CUTTING MY SALARY? IF IT WISHT FOR MYRNA...

ENOCH PULLS TAIL IN TOO, ZACH! I'VE BEEN ONCE/PAYING JED! HE AND YOU GET THE SAME FROM MOM ON! I'M LOWERIN' FOUR PAX AND RAISIN' HUS!



THE BLOATED BODY WITH THE STARING PAIRS OF EYES SWAYED IN THE FORMALDEHYDE! THE DRIED REMAINS IN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS STOOD SILENTLY. FIVE TIMES A DAY THEY GAZED UPON EACH OTHER....

... ENOCH ...

... MYRNA ...



THEN ERNEST FEELEY... ALWAYS THE BUSINESS MAN... ANNOUNCED...

I'M MOVIN' YOU AND MYRNA OUT FRONT, GLING! WE NEED A STAR FOR THE ADMISSIONS! JED AND ENOCH ARE THE STARS NOW...



AND SO, WHEN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM MYRNA'S SUNREN, MUMMIFIED EYES, SHE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... MYRNA...



AND WHEN THE CURTAIN WAS PULLED BACK UNCOVERING ENOCH'S TANK, HE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... ENOCH!



TRUS, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, WHEN THE CARNIVAL FOLK LAY ASLEEP, A DRIED AND SONEY HAND MOVED SLOWLY... HESITANTLY... PULLING AWAY ITS ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS...



... WHILE A BLOATED, PALE HAND SLID UPWARD AND OVER THE TANK-RIM, PULLING ITS CHALKY, PALE BODY AFTER IT...



THE MORNING HEARD THE SIDE-SHOW TENT ECHO WITH ANGRY VOICES...

HE STOLE ENOUGH!

HE STOLE MYRNA!

CALM DOWN, YOU TWO!



ERNEST QUIETED THE JAGGING ODDITY OWNERS...

USE YOUR HEADS, YOU FOOLS! IF BOTH ARE MISSING, NEITHER OF YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT!



OLD DOC CLING KNELT TO THE TANKARD AND PICKED UP A MUSTY-SMELLING FILAMENT...

A PIECE OF MYRNA'S WRAPPINGS?

DROPS OF FORMALDEHYDE? THEY GO THAT WAY!



THE THREE MEN FOLLOWED THE FRAGMENTS OF BERRY WRAPPINGS AND THE DIOPLETS OF FORMALDEHYDE OUT OF THE SIDE-SHOW TENT AND INTO THE MORNING SUNLIGHT! THE TRAIL WAS CLEAR... VERY CLEAR...

IT LEADS TO THAT HOUSE!

LOOK AT THE SIGN!

WHEW! JUSTICE OF THE... GOOD LORD!



THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WAS VERY FRIENDLY! HE TOLD THE SIDE-SHOW MEN ALL HE KNOW...

COUPLE CAME LAST NIGHT! YEP! WANTED TO GET MARRIED! I DID IT! I PERFORMED THE CEREMONY!

WASN'T THERE ANYTHING STRANGE ABOUT THEM?



SNUCKS! ALL I CAN SAY IS THEY MUST'VE BEEN DRINKING! SMELLED MIGHTY BAD... LIKE AS IF THEY'D BEEN! BUT FIVE BUCKS IS FIVE BUCKS!

DON'T YOU SEE?



DIDN'T SEE NOTHIN'! CAN'T SEE! I'M BLIND, Y'KNOW!

BLIND! GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! CAREFUL NOW! DON'T PEER! HERE COMES THE FINISHP BRAGE YOURSELVES! FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT MR. FEELY, JR., AND ZACH LOST MYRNA AND ENOCH'S TRAIL AFTER THEY LEFT THE J.P. I JUST COULDN'T FIND 'EM' IN FACT, IT WASN'T TILL A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE CARNIVAL RETURNED TO THE VERY COUNTR' TOWN WHERE ENOCH HAD FIRST JOINED THE SIDE-SHOW...



... THAT MR. FEELY HEARD ABOUT THE STRANGE GOIN'S UP IN THE MOUNTAINS...

SOMEBODY SAID THEY SEEN 'EM, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE 'EM' WHO EVER HEARD OF A LIVIN' MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED COMFEE...

WHERE? WHERE? DID THEY SEE 'EM?



UP IN THE OLD CROONE CAVE? SHE'S DEAD NOW! BUT THE FOLKS 'ROUND HERE ARE MIGHTY SUPERSTITIOUS! IFN YOU ASK ME, THEY'RE SEEN' THINGS' NOW...

WELL TAKE ME THERE! ME KNOW WHERE IT IS!



THEY WENT! JOB AND ZACH, WHO'D STAYED ON WITH THE CARNIVAL AS HARDY MEN, AND MR. FEELY! THEY WENT UP THE MOUNTAIN TO THE OLD CROONE'S CAVE...



LOOK! GOOD LORD! IT'S THEM!

AND THE THREE CARNIVAL MEN DRAGGED THEIR LONG-LOST ODDITIES BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.



MYRNA! MY MYRNA! ENOCH! MY BOY?

AT LAST! AFTER OVER A YEAR!

BUT THE THREE MEN WERE OUT OF EARSHOT WHEN THE MAIL DRIFTED OUT FROM DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE CROONE'S CAVE! THEY NEVER SAW THE INFANT-TWING CRAWL OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT... ITS EYES STREAMING WITH TEARS... CRYING FOR ITS PARENTS...



WAAHHH

HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S IT, KIDDIES! THAT'S MY STORY! YEP! ENOCH OF THE DOUBLE DOMES WAS MY OLD MAN, AND MYRNA WAS MY OLD LADY. YOU MIGHT SAY, THE MUMMY WAS MY MOMMY! BY THE WAY! I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S A CARNIVAL TODAY... EIGHTY YEARS LATER...

THAT STILL CARRS A MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED PRESERVED COMFEE? IF I CAN IF YOU SEE THEM, WRITE ME! I WANT TO SEND A GALS! IT'S THEIR ANNIVERSARY NEXT MONTH!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR



HEH, HEH! WELL! SO WE MEET AGAIN, DEAR FRIENDS! WELCOME!
WELCOME! ONCE MORE TO THE *CRYPT OF TERROR!* THIS TIME I
HAVE A REALLY CHILLING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION OF SPINE-
TINGLERS TO RELATE TO YOU! NOW, LIE BACK IN YOUR CASSETS!
TUCK YOURSELVES IN WITH YOUR SHROUDS! COMFY? GOOD! THEN
I'LL BEGIN! I CALL THIS STORY...

THE THING FROM THE GRAVE!



JAMES BARRY AND WILLIAM PERTH WERE BOTH IN LOVE WITH THE SAME GIRL, LAURA WILSON! JIM WAS KING... CONSIDERATE... A GENTLE MAN! BILL WAS BRAZEN... FUN-LOVING... AND AT TIMES, LAURA WAS ALMOST AFRAID OF HIM! AND SO WHEN JIM ASKED THE INEVITABLE QUESTION...



MARRY ME, LAURA? I KNOW I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY!

BUT, JIM! WHAT ABOUT BILL? I... I'M AFRAID OF WHAT HE'LL DO WHEN HE FINDS OUT!



DON'T WORRY, LAURA! BILL WILL HAVE TO TAKE IT LIKE A MAN! ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR, Y'KNOW!

YES! BUT BILL ISN'T THE TYPE TO GIVE UP EASILY!



LAURA DIDN'T KNOW HOW RIGHT SHE WAS WHEN SHE SPOKE THOSE WORDS! YES! BILL WAS NOT THE TYPE TO GIVE UP SO EASILY! HE WANTED LAURA!



... AND I'LL HAVE HER, TOO! EVEN IF I HAVE TO KILL YOU, JAMES BARRY!

SOON, LAURA AND JIM WERE MARRIED! THEY WERE VERY HAPPY THOSE FIRST FEW WEEKS... BUT THEN, BUSINESS CALLED JIM OUT OF TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS...



I'LL BE BACK THURSDAY NIGHT, DEAREST!

OH, JIM! I'M AFRAID! I DON'T WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE! BILL NIGHT...



BILL WON'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU, LAURA! BUT, IF YOU EVER ARE IN DANGER, NO MATTER WHERE I AM, SOMEDAY, I'LL GET TO YOU... AND SAVE YOU!

YOU'RE JOKING WITH ME, JAMES BARRY... BUT I'VE BEEN SERIOUS!



SO HAVE I, LAURA? SO HAVE I? 'BYE!

'BYE, JIM! HURRY BACK!

JIM'S CAR SPED ALONG A DARK COUNTRY ROAD TOWARDS THE MAIN HIGHWAY! THE HEADLIGHTS, BURSTING THROUGH THE VELVETY BLACKNESS, SUDDENLY FELL UPON...



A MAN! STANDING IN THE ROAD...



JIM PRESSED HARD ON HIS BRAKES AND THE CAR SCREECHED TO A STOP.

CRAZY FOOL! I COULD HAVE KILLED YOU! WHO ARE YOU... ANYWAY?

BILL! IT'S ME... BILL!



THE SHADY FIGURE MOVED TOWARDS THE CAR... AND AS HE PASSED THE HEADLIGHT, A GLINT OF SHINY STEEL CAUGHT JIM'S EYE...



HE... HE'S GOT A KNIFE! HE'S... GOING TO KILL ME!

THE SOUND OF A STRUGGLE SHATTERED THE SILENCE HANGING OVER THE DESERTED ROAD AND THE HEAVY WOODS FLANKING IT! THEN THERE WAS A THUD AND A FEROCIOUS SCREECH...



... AND NOW, LAURA WILL BE MINE! ALL MINE!

BILL FEATH PICKED UP THE BODY OF THE MURDERED JAMES BERRY AND DRAGGED IT INTO THE WOODS...



... GOT TO GET RID OF THE BODY SO NO ONE WILL EVER FIND IT! GOT TO BURY IT DEEP IN THESE WOODS!

AGAIN THE TRICE SILENCE OF THE WOODS WAS BROKEN! THIS TIME BY THE SOUND OF A SPADE STRIKING THE SOFT EARTH BELOW TOWERING TREES...



SORRY TO GIVE YOU SUCH A CRUDE BURIAL, JIM OK! BOY, BUT IT'S THE BEST I CAN DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES!

SOON, A GAPING HOLE WAS OPENED AND THE STIFF BODY OF JAMES BARRY WAS DROPPED INTO IT...



HOW TO COVER IT UP, DITCH THE CAR, AND GET BACK HOME? THEN ALL I DO IS WAIT! IF I PLAY MY CARDS RIGHT, SHE'LL BE HOME!

A LITTLE LATER, THE SLEEK FORM OF JAMES BARRY'S AUTOMOBILE HURTTLED OVER A CLIFF INTO A DEEP LAKE...



THEY'LL NEVER FIND THE CAR! IT'LL SINK INTO THE MUD AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE!

AND SO THE JOB WAS DONE! BILL FERTH HAD PLANNED EVERYTHING CAREFULLY! THE WEEKS WENT BY, AND THEN THE TIME CAME FOR HIM TO GO AND SEE LAURA...



YES, LAURA! BUT IT'S OVER A MONTH NOW! HE'S LEFT YOU! HE'S PROBABLY FOUND ANOTHER WOMAN!



I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT, BILL! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM! I KNOW IT! I FEEL IT!

BILL COULD WAIT! HE HAD PLENTY OF TIME! SHE'G COME AROUND! HE WAS SURE! AFTER ANOTHER MONTH...



IF ANYTHING HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN BY NOW, LAURA! CAN'T YOU SEE? HE'S LEFT YOU... DEFEATED YOU!

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM... TO COME BACK!



HE'LL NEVER COME BACK! NEVER!

THEN I'LL WAIT FOR HIM FOREVER! I'LL NEVER STOP LOVING HIM, BILL! JIM WAS MY LIFE! WITHOUT HIM...



THEN... IT'S ALL WASTED! THE PLANNING... THE WORK... THE WAITING... WASTED!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

YES! I KILLED HIM! HE'S DEAD!
I WANTED FOU, LAURA AND HE
STOOD IN MY WAY!



IF YOU HATE
JIM? I HATE
YOU... YOU... FOU
MARRIED? HATE
YOU... HATE...

NOW... I'VE GOT TO KILL YOU, LAURA! IF
I CAN'T HAVE YOU, NO ONE ELSE WILL
EITHER! I'LL MAKE SURE OF THAT!



YOU... YOU'RE
MAD...
A RAVING
MADMAN!

BILL FERTH FORCED LAURA INTO HIS CAR
AND DROVE HER TO A DESERTED CABIN...
DEEP IN THE WOODS NEAR WHERE HE HAD
KILLED JIM...



THIS ROOM HAS NO WINDOWS... SO
WHEN I LOCK YOU IN, YOU WON'T BE
ABLE TO ESCAPE!

W... WHAT ARE
YOU GOING TO DO
TO ME?

I'M GOING TO SET FIRE TO THE CABIN! THEY'LL
NEVER FIND WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU... NEVER!
IT'LL BE ASHES... ALL ASHES!



FACED WITH THE HORROR OF BEING
BURNED ALIVE BY THIS MADMAN,
LAURA SCREAMED FOR HELP...



IT WAS AN EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM
THAT SHOT THROUGH THE WOODS,
REVERBERATING FROM TREE TO TREE...
... ROCK TO ROCK...



AND SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, UNDER
THE SOFT EARTH THAT COVERED IT...
SOMETHING STIRRED... THEN PUSHED
ITS DECAYED AND ROTTED HAND UP
UP... THROUGH THE BLACK DIRT INTO
THE BLACK NIGHT.



EEEEEEEAAGGHH

SLOWLY, THE EARTH GAVE WAY, AS THE THING PUSHED UPWARD, CLEARING THE CLEAN FRESH AIR BEYOND DOWN INTO ITS SHALLOW GRAVE...



BACK AT THE CABIN, BILL Poured THE CAN OF HEROSENE AROUND THE OUTSIDE WALLS...



GO AHEAD... SCREAM, YOU FOOL! NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU!

THE CABIN WAS ON FIRE NOW! INSIDE LAURA CRINGED AGAINST THE DOOR AS THE FLAMES LICKED AT HER... WHITE... HOT...



OH... SAVE ME, JIM! WHEREVER YOU ARE... YOU PROMISED... BOOOO!

IT GOT TO ITS FEET CLUMBSILY... STOOD UPRIGHT IN THE MOONLIGHT! IT LIFTED ITS HEAD... LISTENING! IT HAD HEARD A SCREAM... A SCREAM THAT HAD MADE IT SEEK THE OPEN AIR...



IT MOVED FORWARD AT A STUMBLING GATE! ITS ROTTED LEGS... ITS SIGHTLESS EYES... THE DECAYED FLESH THAT CLUNG HERE AND THERE TO WHITENED BONE... MOVED THROUGH THE UNDERBUSH...



BUT OUT IN THE DEEP SHADOWS OF THE WOODS, THE THING HEARD THE SCREAM... AND STUMBLED FORWARD... TOWARD IT.



OUTSIDE, BILL WATCHED AS THE FLAMES LEAPED HIGHER AND HIGHER! THEN, FROM THE FRINGE OF THE TREES, HE SAW THE THING COMING... STUMBLING... STAGGERING...



GOOD LORD!

THE THING DID NOT SEE BILL! IT WAS LOOKING AT THE BURNING CABIN! BILL PUT HIS HAND OVER HIS MOUTH! HE WAS SICK! HE WHIMPERED...



THE THING WENT INTO THE FIRE! IT DID NOT FEEL, THE FLAMES LICKING AT ITS TATTERED CLOTHES... ITS ROTTED FLESH! IT WAS DEAD! IT COULD FEEL NOTHING...



AFTER A FEW MOMENTS IT CAME OUT! ITS HAIR WAS SINGED! ITS DECAYED FLESH WAS CHARRED! WHERE THE FIRE HAD TOUCHED THE BONE, IT WAS BLACK AND SCORCHED! IT CARRIED THE GIRL...



BILL WAS SCREAMING NOW! HE BEGAN TO RUN WILDLY INTO THE WOODS... SCREAMING... SCREAMING...



THE THING PUT LAURA DOWN ON THE COOL GRASS FAR FROM THE BURNING CABIN! SHE WAS UNCONSCIOUS! SHE HAD Fainted BEFORE THE THING HAD REACHED HER! SHE HAD NOT SEEN IT...



THEN THE THING TURNED... TOWARDS THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKING THAT CAME FROM THE NEARBY WOODS...



SLOWLY IT SHAMBLED TOWARDS THE SCREAMING BILL AS HE CRASHED MADLY THROUGH THE THICK UNDER-GROWTH...



SUDDENLY, BILL STUMBLED INTO A TAPPING BLACK HOLE...



GOOD GOD! HIS GRAVE!
JIM'S GRAVE... WHERE I
BURIED HIM!

THE THING WAS COMING NOW! BILL TRIED TO STAND BUT HE COULDN'T! THE PAIN! HE HAD BROKEN HIS LEG! HE TRIED TO DRAG HIMSELF FROM THE SHALLOW PIT... BUT THEN...



NO... NO!

THE THING WAS ON TOP OF HIM, PUSING HIM DOWN! HE TRIED TO STRUGGLE, BUT THE THING WAS STRONG! IT HELD HIM EASILY...



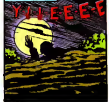
LET ME GO! LET
ME GO! YOU'RE
DEAD! DEAD!

AND THEN THE THING BEGAN, WITH ONE ROTTED AND DECAYED HAND, TO FILL THE GRAVE AGAIN... BURYING THEM...



NO... NO! YOU CAN'T
BURY ME! I'M ALIVE...
ALIVE!

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO FILL THE GRAVE! THE DIRT WAS GETTING TO BILL'S EYES... HIS MOUTH! HIS SCREAMING WAS WILD! NOW... HYSTERICAL, MAD, TERRORIZED SCREAMING...



YEEEEEE

AND THEN... AFTER A WHILE... THE SCREAMING STOPPED...



AND THAT'S MY STORY, DEAR READERS! JIM CERTAINLY *KEPT HIS PROMISE* TO LAURA, DIDN'T HE? LUCKY FOR HER SHE *Fainted* BEFORE HE GOT THERE, THOUGH! SHE'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM IN A *ROSE* WAY, NOW! AND POOF! BILL! NOW JIM'S GOT HIM FOR COMPANY...



...DOWN THERE WHERE IT'S COLD AND BLACK! WELL, THEY CAN ALWAYS HOLD *DRIVE CONVERSATIONS* TOGETHER! HEH, HEH! NOW, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BROKEN UP OVER *TWO* TALE... WHY NOT READ ON! MORE CHILLS AWAIT YOU!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! I SEE YOU'RE *WORRIED-NORRIED* AGAIN. BACK FOR MORE *SAYOFF* SERVINGS OF SCREAMS FROM MY *CAULDRON*? WELL, *GOOD!* WELCOME TO THE *HAUNT OF FEAR!* THIS IS YOUR *DELIRIUM-DISTICIUM*, THE *OL' O' WITCH* COOKING UP ANOTHER *REVOLTING* RECIPE! READY GOT YOUR *GRUEL* CUPS FASTENED UNDER YOUR *DRUMMING* SKINS? GOT YOUR *SWAGGERS* TIED NEATLY AROUND YOUR *NECKS*? THEN I'LL BEGIN *DISHING* OUT THE *TERROR-TIGHT* I CALL.

HORROR WE? HOW'S BAYOU?

THE MOSS-LADEN CYPRESS TREES THAT LINE THE ROTTEN BAYOU ROAD SEEM TO HURT. AND AN OLD PLANTATION HOUSE, WEATHERBEATEN AND RAGGED, LOOKS UP IN THE CAR'S HEADLIGHT BEAMS! ITS COLUMNED PORTICO LEERS OMINOUSLY LIKE SOME GIANTIC FANGED MONSTER SQUATTING IN THE ROAD, BLOCKING THE AUTOMOBILE'S FURTHER PROGRESS! OFF IN THE DISTANCE A SWAMPY BIRD SCREAMS INTO THE NIGHT, AS IF LAUGHING AT THE DRIVER'S DISCOMFORT.

BLAST IT! THIS ROAD ENDS HERE!
BUT I'M SURE THAT SIGN BACK THERE POINTED *THIS* WAY...

THE CAR DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND A YOUNG MAN STEPS OUT! HE STRIDES TOWARD THE SUN-DOWN MANSION...

THERE'S A LIGHT SHINING THROUGH ONE OF THOSE SHATTERED WINDOWS! THAT MEANS SOMEONE'S LIVING THERE! PERHAPS THEY CAN GIVE ME DIRECTIONS...

GREY FORMS SCATTER AS THE LOST STRANGER MOUNTS THE STEPS OF THE COLUMNED PORCH.

WHEN? SWAMP RATS? UGH! HOW COULD ANYONE LIVE OUT IN THIS GOD-FORSAKEN COUNTRY?

THE LARGE BRASS DOOR-KNOCKER RESOUNDS HOLLOWLY INSIDE THE ONCE GLORIOUS HOUSE! FOOTSTEPS APPROACH AND THE HEAVY OAK FRONT DOOR CREAKS OPEN...

YES? HOW DO YOU DO? MY NAME IS FORMAN. **MAT FORMAN**. I MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE TURNING A FEW MILES BACK...

THE DOOR OPENS WIDE, REVEALING A SMALL, SAG-EYED, MIDDLE-AGED MAN.

COME IN, MR. FORMAN! COME IN! MY I'D GONE TO BED! I'D WAKEN UP FOR TONIGHT!

GIVEN UP? ... I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

GIVEN UP WAITING FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU TO COME ALONG, MR. FORMAN? YOU SEE, I SWITCHED THAT SIGN DOWN THERE SO YOU'D MAKE THE TURN INTO OUR ROAD.

YOU YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE? WHY?

FOR EVERETT, MR. FORMAN? EVERETT... MY BROTHER! EVERY SO OFTEN HE GETS DIFFICULT... AND I HAVE TO PROMISE HIM THINGS.

BUT WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ME?

EVERETT IS MAD, MR. FORMAN! THAT'S WHY WE LIVE OUT HERE IN THE SWAMPS! HE IS DANGEROUS! HE IS A NOMINAL MANIAC...

BUT... WHY... WHY... WHY ME? CHOKE!

EVERETT HAS A STRONG DESIRE TO *KILL*, MR. FORWARD! THIS DESIRE CANNOT GO UNSATISFIED FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME! IF IT DOES... HE MAY TURN ON ME!

YOU'RE... YOU'RE JOKING? THIS IS SOME SORT OF GAG?

IF YOU WILL, LOOK BEHIND YOU, YOU WILL SEE THAT THIS IS NO JOKE, MR. FORWARD!

GASP!

UH-HUHH! ...FOR EVERETT? FOR ME?

YES, EVERETT FOR YOU!

UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

IT'S KEEP AWAY!

UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

KEEP AWAY-A-A

E EGGGHHH!

KEEP AWAY!

THE SCREAMING PROTESTS OF THE YOUNG MAN DIE IN A CHOKING CURSLE AS THE LUMBERING MANIAC'S VIC-LIKE FINGERS CLOSE AROUND HIS NECK...

UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

TAKE HIM AWAY, EVERETT! TAKE HIM DOWN INTO THE CELLAR! I DON'T WANT TO SEE

THE ELDER MAN WATCHES AS HIS TOURNER MAD BROTHER SWINGS THE PROSTRATE FORM OF THE STRANGER OVER HIS MASSIVE SHOULDERS AND MOVES OFF THROUGH THE MUSTY OLD MANSION...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU BUSMEMBER HIS BODY!

UH-HUHH... UH-HUHH...

LATER, THE DOOR TO THE OLD PLANTATION HOUSE OPENS AND THE ELDER BROTHER COMES OUT.

HOW TO GET RID OF THE CAR.

THE CAR LEAPS FORWARD WITH A LOUD GRINDING OF GEARS, DOWN AN OVERGROWN PATH, FINALLY STOPPING BEFORE A SHIMMERING YELLOW POOL...

THE QUICK-SAND POOL WILL SWALLOW UP ALL TRACES OF IT.

RELEASING THE EMERGENCY BRAKE, THE ELDER BROTHER LEAPS OUT, AND THE CAR ROLLS FORWARD INTO THE BUCKING SOG, SINKING SLOWLY FROM SIGHT! BEYOND, FROM THE MANSION, A SICKENING SHRIEK OF LAUGHTER ESCOES INTO THE BAYOU NIGHT.

FOOM EVERETT! WELL, PERHAPS THIS WILL SATISFY HIM FOR A WHILE, AT LEAST!

FINALLY THE CAR HAS DISAPPEARED BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE ROLLING QUICKSAND POOL! THE ELDER BROTHER MOVES BACK THROUGH THE BAYOU OVERGROWN TO THE MANSION! EVERETT STANDS IN THE OPEN DOORWAY BREATHING REQUIVLY! HIS HANDS ARE SLOTTED RED.

I'M FINISHED, SIDNEY! COME... SEE!

H-NO THANK YOU, EVERETT! JUST PUT WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM IN THE SACK AS USUAL.

EVERETT LUMBERS OFF AND RETURNS SHORTLY AFTER, A LARGE BLOOD-STAINED SACK SWUNG OVER HIS SHOULDERS.

HE... HE WAS A DOCTOR. SIDNEY! I FOUND HIS GARDY! I DON'T LIKE DOCTORS!

THROW WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM IN THE QUICKSAND POOL, EVERETT... WITH THE OTHERS!

EVERETT'S STUPID FACE BRIGHTENS! HE GRINS IDIOTICALLY.

REMEMBER THE OTHERS, SIDNEY! THE FAT SALESMAN, AND THE WOMAN...

YES, EVERETT! I REMEMBER! GO AHEAD, NOW IN THE QUICKSAND POOL...

THE WOMAN WAS NICE! HER FLESH WAS SO SOFT! WHEN I CUT...

EVERETT!



EVERETT SCURRIES OFF TOWARD THE QUICKSAND POOL WITH HIS GORY CARGO! SIDNEY WATCHES HIM GO! YES! THE WOMAN! SHE WAS THE FIRST! HE REMEMBERED HER!

I SEE YOUR PAROON, MA'AM! MY BROTHER IS NOT TOO BRIGHT! COULD I HELP YOU?

I... I WANTED TO REACH HOUMA BY DARK! I MUST HAVE TURNED OFF THE MAIN ROAD!

I'M AFRAID I'VE LOST MY WAY! COULD YOU HELP ME GET BACK TO THE THE HIGHWAY?

UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

EVERETT? WHO IS IT?



YOU'LL NEVER MAKE HOUMA TONIGHT! WE'AM! YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY THE NIGHT, INSURE YOU CAN START OUT FRESH IN THE MORNING!

WELL... I DON'T KNOW! I WOULDN'T WANT TO IMPOSE...

YES! THE WOMAN HAD BEEN THE FIRST! DURING THAT NIGHT, EVERETT HAD GONE TO HER ROOM AND...

THE SCREAM HAD AWAKENED SIDNEY! HE'D RUSHED TO THE WOMAN'S ROOM!



UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

SIDNEY HAD THROWN THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF THE WOMAN'S BODY INTO THE QUICKSAND POOL! THAT HAD BEEN THE BEGINNING OF IT! AFTER THAT, EVERETT HAD GOTTEN WORSE AND WORSE! AND SIDNEY REALIZED THAT HE'D HAVE TO SUPPLY HIS MAD BROTHER WITH OTHER VICTIMS TO KEEP HIM SATISFIED...

SO SIDNEY'D THOUGHT OF ALTERING THE DIRECTIONAL SIGN DOWN AT THE ROAD, SO WANDERERS WOULD COME TO THE MANSION.

ALL RIGHT, EVERETT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!

UH-HUHH! UH-HUHH!

MY NAME'S JACKSON, ANTHONY SALESMAN! I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN! I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN ONTO YOUR ROAD BY MISTAKE!

COME IN, MR. JACKSON! COME IN!



AND NOW THE DOCTOR! SMOKEY WATCHES AN EVERETT LUMBER'S BACK ONTO THE PORCH CARRYING THE EMPTY SACK

DID YOU?

YES, SMOKEY! I... I THREW THE PICES IN THE POOL!



COME TO BED, T-YES... SMOKEY! EVERETT?



SOON, THE LIGHTS BLINK OFF ONE BY ONE IN THE RAMSHACKLE OLD PLANTATION HOUSE! SMOKEY AND HIS MAD BROTHER ARE ASLEEP! BUT DOWN IN THE BAYOU, THE DUCKSAND POOL ROLLS AND QUIVERS...



BENEATH ITS SACRIFICING SURFACE, THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF THREE BODIES... A WOMAN'S, A SALESMAN'S, AND A DOCTOR'S... BUMP TOGETHER, TURNING LAZILY... MELTING... FUSING... REORGANIZING THEMSELVES... UNTIL...



...A PULPY HAND REACHES INTO THE BAYOU MIGHT...

A STRIPPY-HAIRED ROTTEN WOMAN'S HEAD BOBS TO THE SURFACE



ANOTHER FOLLOWS...THE FLUWY SALESMAN'S FACE APPEARS



AND THEN THE RECENTLY MURDERED DOCTOR'S HEAD...



IN HIS BEDROOM, SIDNEY STIRS UNCOMFORTABLY IN HIS SLEEP. SUDDENLY, THE DOOR TO HIS CHAMBER BURSTS OPEN AND THREE FIGURES ARE FRAMED IN IT, STYLING UNSTEADILY.

THE FIGURES MOVE FORWARD... INTO THE LIGHT! BUT THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGELY WRONG ABOUT THE FIGURES? SIDNEY STARES IN HORROR AS WHIMPER ESCAPED FROM HIS THROAT.



WHO... WHO'S THERE? EVERETT?
IS THAT... YOU? I THOUGHT I
LOOKED YOU IN... YOUR CASE.



NO! NO! OH, LORD...

FOR THE DISMEMBERED PARTS OF EVERETT'S THREE VICTIMS HAVE FUSED INCORRECTLY? THE WOMAN'S HEAD RESTS UPON THE SALESMAN'S TORSO.

...WHILE DOCTOR FORMAN'S HEAD RESTS UPON THE WOMAN'S TORSO.

AND MR. JACKSON'S, THE SALESMAN'S, HEAD HAS FUSED WITH THE DOCTOR'S BODY.



THE OTHER PARTS, THE ARMS AND LEGS OF EACH, ARE EQUALLY AS CONFUSED. THE CONGLOMERATION MOVE FORWARD... TOWARD THE HYSTERICALLY SCREAMING SIDNEY.

GLUTCHED IN ONE OF THE MIXED-UP-FIGURE'S HANDS IS A SMALL BLACK BAG. THE KIND USED BY DOG-FORDS TO CARRY THEIR SHINY LITTLE SHARP INSTRUMENTS...

EEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAGGGGHHHHHHHHH!



LOOKED IN HIS BARRED-WINDOW ROOM, EVERETT LISTENS WITH GREAT FOCUZZEMENT TO THE SHRIEKING THAT ECHOES THROUGH THE OLD HOUSE FOR THE NEXT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES.

FINALLY, THE SHRIEKING STOPS, AND ONLY A SOFT PITIFUL SOB-BING IS HEARD FROM THE BARRED WINDOW. EVERETT WATCHES AS THREE FIGURES TOSSEY OUT OF THE MANSION.

... AND BACK INTO THE BAYOU TO THE QUICKSAND POOL.

YAAAAEEEEEEEEEE!



SUDDENLY A KEY RATTLES INTO THE LOCK OF THE HEAVY DOOR OF EVERETT'S ROOM! HE TURNS FROM THE BARRED WINDOW! *SOWER*, OR WHAT HIS *DUCE* SIDNEY BUT IS NOW NOTHING MORE THAN A *CONFUSED REORGANIZATION* OF SIDNEY'S *DISEMBELED* BODY, STANDS BEFORE HIM...THE *UPSIDE-DOWN* HEAD HANGING FROM THE *LEFT* HIP, *SOBBING*. THE *LEFT* LEG, SEWN TO THE *LEFT* SHOULDER, CROOKED AWKWARDLY AROUND A *MADE* SHIRT CRUTCH. THE *RIGHT* LEG SWAYING FROM THE *RIGHT* SHOULDER...THE *LEFT* ARM ERUPTING FROM THE *NECK*, CESTICULATING. AND THE *RIGHT* ARM SUPPORTING THE ENTIRE *BEISLY* SIGHT.

WELL, HE'S 'TIP' SIDNEY! EVERETT'S PICTURES REALLY *WESSED* UP HIS BROTHER SIDNEY! YOU MIGHT SAY THEY *ROT TOGETHER!* OF COURSE THE *SOC* WAS A *SURBORN*, SO HIS HEAD *DIRECTED* THE WHOLE *ORIENTATION!* WHAT A *LAMER* (THOUGH)! HE'D HAD NO *IMAGINATION!* IN HIS *BASS!* SIDNEY THOUGHT IT WAS A *SORCER* WHAT *HAPPENED* TO SIDNEY AND EVERETT! YOU ASK? OH, THEY'RE STILL *DOWN* THERE DEEP IN THE *BAYOUS* OF *LOUISIANA!* NEXT TIME YOU'RE *DIPPING* IN THAT SECTION JUST *LOOK* FOR THEM! THAT IS - IF *THEY* DON'T LOOK FOR YOU *FIRST!* AND NOW THE *PAID-KEEPER* SMASH! SEE YOU *LATER*...

EVERETT! LOOK...WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO ME!

UH-HUH...CHORE...



The OCTOBER GAME

MITCH PUT THE SUN BACK INTO THE BUREAU DRAWER.

NO NOT THAT WAY. LOUISE WOULDN'T SUFFER THAT WAY SHE WOULD BE DEAD AND IT WOULD BE OVER AND SHE WOULDN'T SUFFER. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT THIS THING HAVE, ABOVE ALL, DURATION. DURATION THROUGH IMAGINATION. NOW CAN I PROLONG HER SUFFERING? NOW, FIRST OF ALL, CAN I BRING IT ABOUT WELL...



THE MAN STANDING BEFORE THE BEYOND MIRROR CAREFULLY FITTED HIS CUFF LINKS TOGETHER. HE PAUSED LONG ENOUGH TO HEAR THE CHILDREN RUN BY SWIFTLY ON THE STREET BELOW, OUTSIDE THIS WARM TWO-STORY HOUSE, LIKE SO MANY GRAY WICE, THE CHILDREN... LIKE SO MANY LEAVES...



BY THE SOUND OF THE CHILDREN, YOU KNEW THE CALENDAR DAY. BY THEIR SCREAMS, YOU KNEW WHAT EVENING IT WAS. YOU KNEW IT WAS VERY LATE IN THE YEAR. OCTOBER. THE LAST DAY OF OCTOBER, WITH WHITE GHOST MASKS AND CUT PUMPKINS AND THE SMELL OF DROPPED CANDLE FAT...



A HORROR SUSPENSTORY
ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY
RAY BRADBURY

NO THINGS HADN'T BEEN RIGHT FOR SOME TIME. OCTOBER DON'T HELP ANY. IF ANYTHING, IT MADE THINGS WORSE. HE NODDED SLOWLY AT HIS IMAGE IN THE MIRROR... ADJUSTING HIS SLACK BOW-TIE...

IF... IF THIS WERE *SPRING*, THEN THERE MIGHT BE A CHANGE. BUT *TONIGHT*, ALL THE WORLD IS MOVING DOWN INTO *WINTER*. THERE'S NO *GUESS* OF SPRING, NONE OF THE *FRESHNESS*, NONE OF THE *PROMISE*...



BUT IT WAS *DIFFERENT* TONIGHT! THERE WAS A FEELING OF AUTUMN COMING TO LAST A *MILLION YEARS*. THERE WOULD BE *NO SPRING*. HE HAD BEEN CRYING QUIETLY ALL EVENING. IT DIDN'T SHOW ON HIS FACE. IT WAS ALL SOMEWHERE HIDDEN, BUT IT WOULDN'T STOP.



DADDY?

MARION?

MITCH HAD NEVER LIKED OCTOBER... EVER SINCE HE FIRST LAY IN THE AUTUMN LEAVES BEFORE HIS GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE MANY YEARS AGO AND HEARD THE WIND AND SAW THE EMPTY TREES. IT HAD MADE HIM CRY, WITHOUT A REASON...



AND A LITTLE OF THAT SADNESS RETURNED EACH YEAR TO HIM. IT ALWAYS WENT AWAY WITH THE SPRING.

THERE WAS A DOFT RUNNING IN THE HALL. IT WAS MARION, HIS LITTLE ONE. ALL EIGHT QUIET YEARS OF HER, NEVER A WORD. JUST HER LUMINOUS GRAY EYES AND HER WONDERING LITTLE MOUTH. MARION HAD BEEN IN AND OUT ALL EVENING, TRYING ON VARIOUS MASKS, ASKING HIM WHICH WAS MOST TERRIFYING, MOST HORRIBLE. THEY'D BOTH FINALLY DECIDED...



THE *SKELETON* MASK, DADDY. ISN'T IT JUST IT'LL SCARE THE *BEANS* FROM PEOPLE? I'M NOT LIKE IT, TOO!

AS HE FINISHED HIS BOW-TIE AND PUT ON HIS DARK COAT, MARION APPEARED IN THE DOOR, ALL SKELETONOUS IN HER DISGUISE...



HOW DO I LOOK, DADDY?

FINE!

FROM UNDER THE MASK, BLONDE HAIR SHOWED. FROM THE SKULL SOCKETS, SMALL BLUE EYES SMILED. MITCH NODDED. MARION, AND LOUISE... THE TWO SILENT DENIGNERS OF HIS VISILITY, HIS DARK POWER...



COMING DOWN, DADDY?

IN A MOMENT...

WHAT ALCHEMY HAD THERE BEEN IN LOUISE THAT TOOK THE CARE OF A DARK MAN AND BLEACHED AND BLEACHED THE DARK BROWN EYES AND BLACK HAIR AND WASHED AND BLEACHED THE INBORN BABY ALL DURING THE PERIOD BEFORE BIRTH UNTIL THE CHILD WAS DOWN, MARION, BLONDE, BLUE-EYES, RUDDY-CHEEKED...



LOUISE HAD NEVER WANTED A CHILD. SHE'D BEEN FRIGHTENED OF THE IDEA OF BIRTH. HE'D FORCED THE CHILD ON HER. IT HAD BEEN VERY EASY FOR LOUISE TO HATE THIS HUSBAND WHO SO WANTED A SON THAT HE'D GIVE HIS ONLY WIFE OVER TO A MORTUARY. WHEN MITCH HAD PUT OUT A HAND TO TOUCH, THE MOTHER HAD TURNED AWAY TO CONSPIRE WITH HER NEW PINK DAUGHTER-CHILD, AWAY FROM THE DARK FORCING MURDERER.



NOW IT WAS OCTOBER AGAIN. THERE HAD BEEN OTHER OCTOBERS. HE'D THOUGHT OF THE LONG WINTERS, YEAR AFTER YEAR, THE ENDLESS MONTHS MOUNTAINED INTO THE HOUSE BY AN INSANE FALL OF SNOW, TRAPPED WITH A WOMAN AND CHILD, NEITHER OF WHOM LOVED HIM...



SOMETIMES HE SUSPECTED THAT LOUISE HAD COMBINED THE CHILD AS AN IDEA, COMPLETELY ASEXUAL, A CONCEPTION OF CONTENTIOUS MIND AND CELL. AS A FIRM REFUSE TO HIM, SHE HAD PRODUCED A CHILD IN HER OWN IMAGE. HER EYES, THAT DAY IN THE HOSPITAL, WERE COLD. THEY'D SAID...



AND IT HAD ALL BEEN SO BEAUTIFULLY IRONIC. HIS SELFISHNESS DERIVED IT. THE DOCTOR HAD SHAKEN HIS HEAD AND SAID...



URING THE EIGHT YEARS, THERE HAD BEEN RESPITES. IN SPRING AND SUMMER HE GOT OUT, WALKED, WENT TO GALL GAMES; THERE WERE DESPERATE SOLUTIONS TO THE DESPERATE PROBLEM OF A HATED MAN...



But in winter, the hikers and games and escapes fell away with the leaves. Life, like a tree, stood empty, the fruit picked, the sap run to earth. And now, the eighth winter coming, he knew things were finally at an end. He simply could not wear this one through...



There was an acid wall of fire in him that he slowly eaten through tissue and tissue over the years... and now, tonight, it would reach the wild explosive in him and all would be over. Downstairs, there were shouts and clarity... Marion, greeting the first arrivals... Louise, taking parents' coats...



A rich syrupy smell of candy filled the bustling house. Louise had laid out apples in new skins of caramel. There were vast bowls of punch fresh-mixed...



...strung apples in each doorway... bobbed, vented pumpkins peering triangularly...



...and a waiting tub of water in the center of the living room, with a sack of apples nearby for the bobbing-to-beam...



Witch walked toward the stairs. He hesitated...

Why don't I just pack a suitcase and leave? No, not without hurting Louise as much as she's hurt me. Involvement wouldn't hurt her at all. No, I must hurt her, figure some way to take Marion away from her, legally. Yes, that's it. That would hurt most of all. To take Marion away...



He descended the stairs. Louise didn't look up. The children shouted and moved as he came down.

HELLO, DOWN THERE!

MR. WILDER!

HI!



BY TEN O'CLOCK THE BOORSELL HAD STOPPED RISING, THE APPLES WERE BITTEN FROM STRANGED DOORS, THE PINK CHILD PAGES WERE WIRED DRY FROM APPLE BOBBLING, NAPKINS WERE SWEARED WITH CARAMEL AND PUNCH, AND HE, THE HUSBAND, HAD TAKEN OVER. HE TOOK THE PARTY RIGHT OUT OF LOUISE'S HANDS. HE RAN ABOUT, TALKING TO THE TWENTY CHILDREN AND THE TWELVE PARENTS, WHO WERE HAPPY WITH THE SPECIAL SPEED COOL HE'D FIXED THEM.

HE SUPERVISED FOR THE PAUL ON THE DONKEY...



...SPIN THE BOTTLE...



...MUSICAL CHAIRS...



...AND ALL THE REST, MOST FITS OF SHOUTING LAUGHTER, THEN, IN THE TRIANGULAR-EYED PUMPKIN SHINE, ALL HOUSE LIGHTS OUT, HE CRIED.

HUSH! FOLLOW ME?



HE TILTED TOWARD THE CELLAR. THE PARENTS COMMENTED TO EACH OTHER, MOODING AT THE CLEVER HUSBAND, SPEAKING TO THE LUCKY WIFE...

HOW WELL HE GETS ON WITH THE CHILDREN.

YES.

THE CELLAR? THE TOMB OF THE WITCH?



THE CHILDREN CROWDED AROUND THE HUSBAND, SQUEALING HE MADE A MOCK SHIVER...

ABANDON HOPE. ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.



THE PARENTS CHUCKLED...

ONE BY ONE, THE CHILDREN SLID DOWN A SLIDE, WHICH MITCH HAD FIXED UP FROM TABLE SECTIONS, INTO THE DARK CELLAR. HE NEEDED AND SHOUTED SHASTLY UTTERANCES AFTER THEM. A WONDERFUL WHILING FILLED THE DARK PUMPKIN-LIGHTED HOUSE. EVERYBODY TALKED AT ONCE. EVERYBODY BUT MARION. SHE'D GONE THROUGH THE PARTY WITH A MINIMUM OF SOUND. IT WAS ALL INSIDE HER, ALL OF THE EXCITEMENT AND JOY...

WHEESE...

SOLLY, IT'S DARK...

HURRY...



NOW, THE PARENTS. WITH LAUGHING RELUCTANCE THEY SLID DOWN THE INCLINE, SPHAGORIOUS, WHILE MARION STOOD BY, ALWAYS WANTING TO SEE IT ALL, TO BE THE LAST. LOUISE WENT DOWN WITHOUT MITCH'S HELP. MARION STOOD BY THE SLIDE, MITCH PICKED HER UP.

HERE WE GO...



THEY SAT IN A NASTY CIRCLE IN THE CELLAR. WARMTH CAME FROM THE DISTANT BULK OF THE FURNACE. THE CHAIRS STOOD IN A LONG LINE DOWN EACH WALL, TWENTY SCREAMING CHILDREN, TWELVE RUSTLING RELATIVES, ALTERNATELY SPACED. THEY HAD ALL DROPPED TO THEIR CHAIRS IN THE BLACKNESS. THE ENTIRE PROGRAM FROM HERE ON WAS TO BE ENACTED IN THE DARK, HE AS MR. INTERSCOUTER...



NOW! QUIET!

THERE WAS A SMELL OF DAMP CEMENT AND THE SOUND OF THE WIND CUT IN THE OCTOBER STARS. EVERYBODY SETTLED. THE ROOM WAS BLACK BLACK. NOT A LIGHT, NOT A SHINE, NOT A GLINT OF AN EYE. THERE WAS A SCRAPING OF CROSSBERRY, A METAL RATTLE. THE HUSBAND INTONED...

THE WITCH... IS DEAD. YEE-HEE...



THE WITCH IS DEAD, SHE HAS BEEN KILLED, AND HERE IS THE KNIFE SHE WAS KILLED WITH.



HE HANDED OVER THE KNIFE. IT WAS PASSED FROM HAND TO HAND, DOWN AND AROUND THE CIRCLE, WITH CHUCKLES AND LITTLE OOH CRIES AND COMMENTS FROM THE ADULTS...

THE WITCH IS DEAD, AND THIS IS HER HEAD.



...WHISPERED THE HUSBAND, AND HANDED AN ITEM TO THE NEAREST PERSON.

SOME LITTLE CHILD CRIED HAPPILY IN THE DARK...

OH, I KNOW HOW THIS GAME IS PLAYED. HE GETS SOME OLD CHILDREN INWARD AND HE HANDS THEM AROUND SAYING 'THESE ARE HER INNARDS!', AND HE MAKES A **CLAP HEAD** AND PASSES IT FOR HER HEAD, AND PASSES A **SOUP BOWL** FOR HER ARM, AND HE TAKES A **MARBLE** AND SAYS, 'THIS IS HER EYE!' AND SOME **SOUP** FOR HER TEETH AND A SACK OF **PLUMS ADDING** AND GIVES THAT AND SAYS, 'THIS IS HER STOMACH!' I KNOW HOW THIS IS PLAYED!

WOOF, YOU'LL SPOIL EVERYTHING!



Mitch said...

THE WITCH CAME TO HARM, AND THIS IS HER ARM.

YEE-HEE...



THE ITEMS WERE PASSED AND PASSED, LIKE HOT POTATOES, AROUND THE CIRCLE. SOME CHILDREN SCREAMED, WOULDN'T TOUCH THEM. SOME RAN FROM THEIR CHAIRS TO STAND IN THE CENTER OF THE CELLAR UNTIL THE GRISLY ITEMS HAD PASSED. ONE BOY SCOFFED...



AW, IT'S ONLY CHILDREN INSIDE. COME BACK, HELEN!

SPOT FROM HAND TO HAND WITH SMALL SCREAM AFTER SCREAM, THE ITEMS WENT DOWN THE LINE, DOWN, DOWN, TO BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER AND ANOTHER. THE HUSBAND SAID:

THE WITCH IS CUT APART,
AND THIS IS HER HEART.



SIX OR SEVEN ITEMS MOVING AT ONCE THROUGH THE LAUGHING, TREMBLING DARK, LOUISE SPOKE UP...

MARION DON'T BE AFRAID, IT'S
ONLY PLAY.



MARION DIDN'T SPEAK. LOUISE
ASKED...

MARION?
ARE YOU AFRAID?

SHE'S ALL
RIGHT, SHE'S
NOT AFRAID.



...SAID THE HUSBAND. MARION
DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING...

ON AND ON THE PASSING, THE SCREAMS,
THE HILARITY, THE RETURN WIND
DISHED ABOUT THE HOUSE. AND HE,
THE HUSBAND, STOOD IN THE DARK
CELLAR, INTONING THE WORDS, HANDING
OUT THE ITEMS. LOUISE'S VOICE CAME
AGAIN FROM FAR ACROSS THE CELLAR...



MARION?

EVERYBODY WAS TALKING...

MARION, ANSWER ME, ARE
YOU AFRAID?



EVERYBODY QUIETED...

MARION DIDN'T ANSWER. THE HUSBAND STOOD
THERE AT THE HEAD OF THE DARK CELLAR...
LOUISE CALLED...

MARION, ARE YOU THERE?



NO ANSWER. THE ROOM WAS SILENT...

WHERE'S MARION?

MAYBE SHE'S
DUSTING?

MARION?



NO ANSWER... IT WAS QUIET...

LOUISE CRIED OUT...

TURN ON THE LIGHTS!

MARION...
MARION...



THE ITEMS STOPPED PASSING. THE CHILDREN AND ADULTS SAT WITH THE WITCHES ITEMS IN THEIR HANDS.

THERE WAS A SCRAPING OF A CHAIR, WILDLY, IN THE DARK.

LOUISE GASPED...

NO, NO, DON'T TURN ON THE LIGHTS.

DON'T TURN ON THE LIGHTS, OR 900, 900, 800.

DON'T TURN THEM ON, PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T

TURN ON THE LIGHTS.

DONT!



LOUISE WAS SHRIEKING NOW. THE ENTIRE CELLAR VIBED WITH THE SCREAM. NOBODY MOVED...

EVERYONE SAT SUSPENDED IN THE SUDDEN FROZEN TASK OF THIS OCTOBER GAME; THE WIND BLEW OUTSIDE, BANGING THE HOUSE. THE SMELL OF PUMPKINS AND APPLES FILLED THE ROOM WITH THE SMELL OF THE OBJECTS IN THEIR FINGERS WHILE ONE BOY CRIED...

I'LL GO UPSTAIRS AND LOOK!



... AND HE RAN UPSTAIRS HOPEFULLY AND OUT AROUND THE HOUSE FOUR TIMES, AROUND THE HOUSE, CALLING...

MARION, MARION, MARION!



... AND AT LAST COMING SLOWLY DOWN THE STAIRS INTO THE WAITING, BREATHING CELLAR AND SAYING TO THE DARKNESS...

I CAN'T FIND HER...



THEN... SOME IDIOT TURNED ON THE LIGHTS...



THE END

THE FANS KEEP THE FLAME ALIVE

Comic book history is littered with forgotten titles and abandoned characters. *Tales from the Crypt* and the *Crypt Keeper* could have easily been among them, but for one factor—the fans. High school kids and college students who loved them kept the flame alive—older readers didn't have the time. At times the loyal supporters were down to a mere handful, but at several points along the way history took a lucky bounce that ensured that *Tales from the Crypt* remained in the collective memory a little longer.

The period from 1955 to 1983 defines the low ebb in *Tales* history. EC horror comics had disappeared from newsstands and drugstores and were for the most part forgotten, at least by the general public. But diehard EC fans remembered, largely because they didn't have any alternative. For them, the choice between buying the lobotomized Code-approved new comics and re-reading old favorites was, as it were, a no-brainer.

Before the Fall

The National F.C. Fan-Addict Club (a name that surely gave Dr. Westman the willies) had been founded in summer 1963 and grew rapidly—by March of 1964, there were 17,500 members. The national president's name was "McBain," a *nom de plume* already well known to EC fans who read both the horror comics

and MAD magazine. "National Headquarters"—i.e., EC offices on Lafayette Street in New York—sent all the pins and patches and ID-cards, and encouraged readers to form local chapters, and many of them did. "Any group of five or more prospective members may join as an authorized chapter of the national organization. Each such chapter will be assigned a charter number. The name and address of the elected president of each authorized chapter will be made available to all members, so that those who are not already a member of a chapter will be able to join the one nearest them if they wish to."

The "National Headquarters" wasn't the least bit progressive about being the only fan publication. The September 1964 *Fan-Addict Club Bulletin* listed four other fan publications: *Parade*, *E.C. Fan Journal*, *E.C. Stone Street*, and

The MAD sense of humor thoroughly permeated the EC sensibility—note that the membership card is "invited if signed."





F.C. Group. It also encouraged others who were also putting out fan publications to contact EC for a free plug in the Bulletin. Even then these fan magazines were called "fanzines."

One of them, published by 'Bobby Stewart, Route 4, Klaboville, Texas,' actually publishes the Fan-Addict Club itself. Comics aficionados will better recognize

"Bobby Stewart" as noted comics journalist (Bobby Stewart) Cyber 14. Fanzines soon followed, including F.C. World Pro, Good Luck!, Spoof, Snaps, Rapture, and Conroy. There was also *Abokelt*, considered by many to be the best of the "first generation" of EC fanzines — meaning those that were wanted by readers who could lay *Wile from the Crypt* off the news rack.

As EC came under attack by Dr Wertham and the Senate subcommittee, Gaines tried to rally the reader ship in support of his beleaguered comics, using the E.C. Fan-Addict Bulletin as a bully-pulpit. Fans responded, but they were no match for the Wertham juggernaut. Indeed, their youth and their enthusiasm for horror comics ensured that their opinions would be disregarded. Gaines did not go gentle into that bad night — his *As Menomena* in the final issues of the horror magazines left no doubts in any reader's mind that he'd been railroaded — a victim of injustice.



The periodic E.C. Fan-Addict Club Bulletin helped followers keep tabs on the personal lives of the artists, reinforcing yet again the special sense of connection between the readers of the comics and those who created them.



The Senate Subcommittee to investigate Juvenile Delinquency kept a separate running tally of those who mentioned the E.C. Fan-Addict Club in their letters. Their archives list 287 people who wrote them in support of horror comics.



The E.C. Fan-Addict Club's letter to the Senate Subcommittee, dated February 11, 1954.



From the old artist spotlights and fan-adult ballads, EC readers were already familiar with the names and faces of their favorite artists. Various editors kept in touch with them for interviews and "where are they now?" updates.

Jerry Weist on Becoming a Professional Fan

When I was in elementary school, a friend of mine in Battle Creek, Michigan, offered me seven EC comics for \$1.60. I happened to be sick in bed with the flu the day they arrived. My mother brought me the package and it blew my mind. My friend Roger Hill and I began a methodical search. By not spending our lunch money, doing lawns and other odd jobs, within two and a half years, we had nearly everything. We were fanatical. I used to come home every



Weist with Bill Gaines in 1967

day from grade school and run to get my mail, which was set at the end of the hall. At that time, I was looking for packages either from Claude Held in Ohio or Bill Thuring or

Hosert Rogofsky or Phil Seuling in New York. If there wasn't a manila envelope waiting for me, I'd take my schoolbooks and throw them the entire length of the hall.

By the time Roger and I graduated from high school in 1967, we had complete collections, and were planning our first trip to New York City to visit Bill Gaines, who was our hero. We'd already called Harvey Kurtzman and Bill Elder and Johnny Craig.

If someone had said to me when I graduated from high school, "You're going to make your living doing one of two things: either you're going to become an astronaut and go to the moon, or you'll work for this venerable old English auction house called Sotheby's, and hold auctions of old comic books that bring in one to two million dollars a year," I would have said, "My God! I'm going to be an astronaut—I'm going to the moon!"

When economic reality forced Gaines to drop *Jules* and the other horror titles, many readers were left with a profound feeling of loss. Fans who had been immersed in the EC family spirit mourned when the names stopped coming—it was as if a member of the family had died. For the most devoted EC fans—and there were many—it was a bit like the death of Elvis.

Carrying the Torch

In withdrawal, EC fan-adults reacted the way many fans do when a well-loved celebrity dies suddenly in his prime: they made shrines and venerated artifacts from the past. For several years after the end of *Jules from the Crypt* the fanzines grew up links among the faithful. Rows of the fanzines served as bibliographies, the fans' great libraries revealed not just EC's horror magazines but the science fiction titles as well. They were a place where fans could swap anecdotes and talk about their favorite stories and artists. In short, they were an ongoing printed wake. For EC that was appropriate, since in 1956 it was almost at the grave itself.

MAD was the only bright hope, and its sales were strong. Gaines was convinced that the key to MAD's success was Harvey Kurtzman. At about the same time that Scheraga was beating down on comic books, Kurtzman was offered a job with *Argosy* maga-

zine, which had recently done a feature story on the MAD phenomenon. Harvey had created the idea of working for a "legitimate" magazine, or "shik" as it was known in the publishing business, and was about to defect. Hearing that he would lose Kurtzman, Gaines offered to charge MAD from a comic book to a magazine if Harvey would stay at EC. Kurtzman accepted, and with issue #21 (July 1955), *NIW* changed format to an all-color comic book to a black-and-white magazine.



Bill was nervous about the transition, but the first issue of MAD as a magazine was so popular that they had to go back for a second printing—a rarity in magazine publishing.



Picto-Fiction

Coincidentally, by becoming a magazine rather than remaining a comic book, MAD escaped from Judge Murphy's little old ladies and their censors' scissers. Gaines always maintained that he made the change to keep humorless rather than to get out

from under the C MAA code, but the idea that one could mutate a successful comic book into a successful magazine was not lost on him. In the summer of 1950 he started up four new magazines, dubbed Adult Picto-Fiction. He priced them at a quarter apiece (just like MAD magazine)

THE BASKET

The main text block on the top left of the main page, containing introductory text for the comic strip.



and printed them in black and white rather than color. To further distinguish them from comics, narrative text ran at the top of each panel in lists of dialogue balloons. The magazines featured stories and artwork by E. Nelson and other veterans from the other pulp magazines I cited: *Iron Fists*, *Shock*, *Thrust*, *Crime*, *Thriller*, and *Conquest*. *Thriller*, the title of the magazines left no doubt that Gaines was aiming for the large market of horror lovers that the Code had forced him to abandon.

It wasn't a bad idea, a pan didn't work. The *Adult Pulp-Pulp* magazines were commercial failures. For in 1966, it was clear that they would have to be abandoned if they had been done at Christmas 1955 that they were doomed, but Gaines refused to give up on the bad news during the holidays. As the new year dawned, he was with great sadness was forced to let go much of his staff, including Al Feldman and most of the writers—anyone who was not involved with *MM*. Only a skeleton was working with Harvey Kurtzman retained, and their future was in doubt. Instantly, Gaines also let his friend and business manager, Lyle Stuart, go. The

entire but free-spirited Kurtzman led a continual personal conflict with Stuart, whose difficult job it was to ground the very outlandish bottom line.

Flat Broke

It was not a good time to be without a business manager. The end of *New Direction* was followed closely by the failure of EC's distributor, *Leader News* by January of 1956. *Leader News* went bankrupt, leaving Gaines holding an empty sack where \$100,000 should have been. Worse yet, he owed this \$100,000 that he did not have to his printer and friend, George Dougherty. The coffee were complements empty—there wasn't enough money to fund the 250,000 copies run of *Steel Divided #1* that had already been printed. All 250,000 were destroyed, except for one or two hundred that were hand bound for pressies (*Steel Divided #1* is now the Hope Diamond of EC collectors.)

It was barely ironic that EC in 1966 was so exactly the same financial condition—\$100,000 in the hole—but it had been

Al Feldman wrote many of the *Pulp-Pulp* stories, sometimes under the pseudonym Alfred E. Newman. The story, "The Basket," was reprinted from *House of Fear #7*.



"MAD needed a mascot," says Al Feldstein. "Harvey had this chance with the goofy grin, but he was just in the border on the cover. Norman Mingo painted his portrait, but I had to give him a name. Alfred E. Newman was an EC house pseudonym. I put the name with the kid's picture and we ran him as a write-on candidate for president."



What, me gory? Gaines and Feldstein, the gruesome twosome, are okay, but that guy in the middle, Aldead E. Sleuman, is a real stiff!

Kurtzman arbored by 1st April of 1956, after putting out five issues of MAD as a magazine and just a couple of months after helping convince Gaines *serio et jib* to throw \$100,000 into EC. Harvey was sure enough of his future with Helms that he asked a confrontation with Gaines over control of MAD.

Like a tenant who had lived in the building so long he thought he'd earned the deed to his own apartment, Kurtzman demanded a controlling interest in MAD. Gaines offered him 10 percent, but was offended not just by Kurtzman's power play but by its timing.

Fired by Bill Gaines, largely at Harvey Kurtzman's behest, Lyle Stuart was in Florida to escape the New York women and the stang of his separation from EC. He still clearly

recalls the emergency phone call he received from a sleepshop but panicked Bill Gaines.

"Lyle, I'm in trouble," Bill said.

"What's wrong, Bill?" I asked.

"I know I don't have the right to ask you anything," Bill continued, "but..."

"Come on—*but* what?" I said.

"Well, Harvey Kurtzman is outside, and he said if I don't give him 51 percent of MAD, he's quitting."

So I said, "What floor are you on, the seventh or the eighth?"

Bill said, "I he seventh."

"Good," I said. "You've got the big picture windows behind you. Open the windows, go out, get Kurtzman, and throw him out the window."

Bill began laughing in spite of himself, then took a deep breath.

"Seriously, Lyle, what do I do?"

"Bill, I am serious," I replied. "Do what I tell you. Throw Kurtzman out the window!" he said. "I then what do I do?"

"Get another editor."

"Who?"

"Get Feldstein back," I said.

"Do you think he can do it?" Bill asked.

"Why not? He did fine with *Phooz*—and he was putting out seven other magazines at the same time."

Harvey left with Bill's face propelling him from the rear.

What was particularly painful for Gaines was that Bill Eldo and Jack Davis followed Harvey to work for Helms.

With the deadline for the next issue fast approaching, Gaines needed an editor in MAD.

Lyle Stuart was perhaps the first person to tell him to seek out Al Feldstein, but he wasn't the last. Bill's new bride, Nancy (who had worked in the subscription department of the old comic), gave him the same advice, as did artist Joe Orlando. Hearing the same counsel from three people he trusted, Bill sought out Al once again.

Feldstein had been out of work for about four months. He had spruced up his portfolio and had pounded the pavement looking to hook up with another comic book publisher. Now he was finally on the brink of landing a new position. It was one morning away from checking into this new job when he got off the Long Island Rail Road after having spent the day in Manhattan. Emerging from the train at his stop on Merrick, he saw Bill Gaines' General Michelmans silhouette waiting for him on the platform.



The Bill & Al Show, Part II



Feldstein took up the reins at *MAD* with little if any loss of momentum. The major stumbling block was not the absence of Kertzman, but the departure of Hiler and Davis. Gaines and Feldstein set about building yet another stable of quality artists who, like the EC artists from the early days, would be given star billing in the magazine. Beginning with horror/

science fiction survivors Wally Wood and Joe Orlando, the "usual gang of idiots" they assembled—Don Martin, Antonio Prohara, Sergio Aragones, Dave Berg, Norman Mingo, and Kelly Freza, among others—gave *MAD* its distinctive look and feel and brought it to its peak of popularity. In 1959 *MAD* was the favorite magazine of 28 percent of U.S. college students and 43 percent of high school kids.

By the early 1960s, as America headed into space and an JFK's "New Frontier," *MAD* under Feldstein was soaring, but the memory of the EC horror comics had faded—along with the cost-overs they engendered. Although the first generation of fans had perished out and most fan-scholar were at liberation, the world climate was certainly similar in that in which *Tales from the Crypt* and the other EC comics had first blossomed. Horror was making a strong showing in other media—Red Serling's *Twilight Zone* and Alfred Hitchcock Presents

were popular television shows, and Hitchcock's *Psycho* was one of the top films of 1960.

The horror comeback may have been due to the ongoing terrors of the Cold War, but every day there was horror on the daily news—baptized Nam was Central Adolf Eichmann was captured in Argentina, Cuban exiles were massacred as they invaded their homeland at the Bay of Pigs, babies with flippers instead of arms were being born to women who took Thalidomide during pregnancy. We began being pulled into the *Looney Bin* that became Vietnam. But everyday horror was never more terrifying than the events of November 1963, when Americans got to watch the televised murder of a President and the strange events that followed—over and over and over on slow motion.

Then in 1964, two events occurred that rekindled interest in comics in general and EC comics in particular. The first comic book convention was held in New York City, bringing comic book aficionados and collectors together for the first time. Then in December of that year, New York publisher Ian Ballantine issued reprints of old EC comics. (Ballantine had previously reprinted early issues of the comic book version of *MAD*.) His first was *Tales from the Crypt*. Reprints from the EC science fiction comics, which Ballantine called *Tales of the Incredible*, followed from November later, and in August 1965, Ballantine brought out *The House of Horror*.

Although they were printed in black and white, the Ballantine reprints introduced a new generation of readers to EC comics.

Ballantine successfully published reprints of *MAD* comic book issues and other EC properties.





CHAPTER

Weiss established a high standard for EC scholarship and showed real flair as an editor in his issues of *Squad Tront*.

Derived from the exclamations of Martians in *World's Greatest Comics*, the titles *Squad Tront* and *Spo Fox* were also rumored to be ecological concepts.

Passing the Torch

One of those who took up the torch was Jerry Weiss, who learned of EC comics not from the Halliwell reports but from a friend who sold him a handful of them for the exorbitant sum of \$1.30. Just a couple of months after graduating from high school in June of 1967, Weiss started up *Squad Tront*, which remains the reputation of the last second-generation fanzine. Weiss put out four issues, with Issue #5 (1974) being relinquished the editor's chair to John Benson. Other second-generation fanzines included *Spo Fox* (1968-1989), and *The E.C. Fan-Addict* (later renamed *Synopsis*) (1967-1970).

Another fan-bearer was Russ Cochran, one of the original EC Fan-Addicts. Now a retired professor at Duke University, in 1965 he was set to attend a convention of physics teachers in New York County, remembering his fan-addict days, Cochran wrote Bill Gaines, filling him in on what had happened to the members of Chapter #3 of the E.C. Fan-Addict Club, West Plains, MO. Among the E.C. alumni were two biology professors, a physician, and a scientist—

not an axe murderer in the bunch. Gaines was tickled by the letter and wrote back inviting Cochran to drop in at the MAD office and indulge in his favorite activity, breaking bread over a bottle of good wine. It was, as Roger and Charlie Barr said to one another at the end of *Cavaladeo*, the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

NO. 1

SPO FOX



NO. 2



Russ Cochran: Leader of the West Plains Fan-Addict Club

When I saw my first EC comic, I was fourteen. I lived in the small town of West Plains, Missouri, in the days before television. Comic books were what I coasted on. I read the superhero comics, Captain Marvel, Superman, Batman, and the rest, and the crime comics that came out in the late '40s. By the time I was about 14, which was in 1951, I thought I had passed my comic reading stage until one day I happened upon an EC comic—I think the first one I ever saw was a copy of *House of Fear*. I immediately recognized that the level of writing, the level of artwork, and the O. Henry type endings were very different from what I'd seen before. I loved it right away. I thought, "This is unique."

When the E.C. Fan-Addict Club was formed in 1953, my two younger brothers and I, together with about four other boys in the neighborhood, formed Chapter #3. In my capacity as president I went down to the hardware store and got a wooden shotgun shell box, a couple of hinges, a hasp, and a padlock. I made a locked wood box that held two stacks of EC comics perfectly. Every week we would have a meeting of our chapter. We would ceremoniously unlock the box, and take the comics out. We would sit in a circle, pass the comics around, and read and re-read and re-read them.



Cochran with Buck, one of his three Chihuahuas.

Tales from an English Crypt

In 1971, Amicus Films (a partnership between Max Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky) approached Bill Gaines about putting out a film version of *Tales from the Crypt*. He was charmed by Rosenberg's initiative, and Gaines gave his approval for *Tales from the Crypt*, which was released in 1972. Amicus had already produced *Dr. Amen's House of Horrors* (1964) and *Enter the Ghouls* (1967), both of which had been directed by British director Freddie Francis. Francis took on similar duties for *Tales from the Crypt*, working from a script by Borisinsky. Before becoming a director, Francis had been an on-screen cinematographer, working on such highly regarded films as *Assassins on the Run* (1960) and *Schindler's List* and *Nazis at Morning* (1966). He won an Oscar for cinematography for his work on the film adaptation of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1960).

In keeping with the format of the comic book, the *Tales* movie was a group of stories that were linked together by the narration of the on-screen host, the Crypt Keeper. Starring as the Crypt Keeper was distinguished British actor Ralph Richardson (eventually to become Sir Ralph). Oddly enough, Richardson's first credited screen work was in a 1933 British film called *The Ghost*, which starred William Henry Hall, whose stage name happened to be Boris Karloff. Unfortunately, Richardson in *Tales* looks much more like a dignified but eccentric old artist than the Ghoul makeup created by Telbstein and refined by Jack Davis. Indeed, the Keeper's "Crypt of Terror" is the same run sawtooths of an ancient monastery, and not nearly as sinister as the dark and scary crypt that many had conjured up in their imaginations while reading the comic book.

The first story in the film is "And All Through the House" (originally depicted in *Book of Horror* #33, Feb./Mar. '64, with story and art by Johnny Craig). The tale stars Joan Collins (taking her first steps to revive her career after her divorce from singer Anthony Newley, but very much pre-Mexis Cunningham) as a woman who finds herself stalked by a psychopath after having murdered her husband on Christmas Eve. She is unwittingly done in when her child opens the door to the marauder, who has suited himself up as St. Nicholas. "Reflection of Death," the second story (*Tales from the Crypt* #23, Apr./May '63, Telbstein story and artwork), is the saga of a man who has forsaken his wife and children. On his way to rendezvous with his mistress, he is killed in an auto accident, becoming a grisly walking corpse. Oh, is he? The cad awakens in his car to find that this has all been a nightmare—except that his car is here, heading toward an inevitable crash. (Talk up another behind-the-scenes credit for Anthony Russo.)

Joan Collins' first Christmas gift to herself, a dead husband, was also her last.



New York magazine found the gore in *Tales from the Crypt* too graphic, making the movie the only far "those with sensitive stomachs and short memories."

Sir Ralph's Crypt Keeper here decidedly no resemblance to either the Telbstein or the Davis version.



"Poetic Justice" (*House of Wax*, 12, Mar./Apr. '52, Feldbaum/Ingels), features horror megastar Peter Cushing in an elderly widower who hangs himself after being persuaded to sell his property to the town's richest man and his son. He then rises from his grave on Valentine's Day to haunt his enemies as a ghostly specter. The fourth

story, "Wish You Were Here" (*House of Wax*, Nov./Dec. '54, Feldbaum/Ingels) is a reinterpretation of the "Monkey's Paw," or a takeoff on the old "three wishes" folktale. A woman is granted three wishes. Her first, for money, results in the death of her husband. Her second, for his return, brings her a zombie spouse. Her third, for his eternal

Makeup artists achieved a remarkable similarity between Peter Cushing in full regalia for the movie version of "Poetic Justice" and the Feldstein drawing in "Reflection of Death."



Cushing was one of horror's leading men, having achieved stardom in numerous Hammer productions in the 1950s.

Director Freddie Francis on the First *Tales from the Crypt* Movie

Academy Award winner Freddie Francis used his connections with the British film industry to bring noted actors and quality technical staff into what was essentially a low-budget production. "I insisted on key people with whom I'd worked previously. It was rather difficult because as a cameraman, the films that I'd photographed before were in a much more expensive category. It was often difficult to persuade people to work on these horror films, but we managed to get a few."

Tales from the Crypt was shot in about thirty days, and a lot of it was a bit more improvisational than Francis might have liked:

"Max [Rosenberg] and Milton [Subotzky] would budget a film and try to raise the money for it. Eventually somebody would offer them about half or two-thirds of what they needed and they would go ahead and begin production, then raise the rest as they went along. I was always presented with scripts that were about half as long as they should be, so I'd have to get about adding scenes, sometimes even as we were shooting. We had some fun doing *Tales*, but it was always a real shoe-string operation."

Since the film was an anthology of short stories, each with a different cast, none of the actors was involved for more than a week.

"We had Ralph Richardson for two days and things were going slightly awry because the script was much too short. We made it up as we went along, and dear old Ralph didn't mind. I used to keep going along and apologizing to him, but he was quite happy in his dressing room, reading his books. We actually used just a half day of real shooting; to shoot just dialogue with Ralph didn't take any time at all."

Francis would have much preferred to keep more of the same sense of tongue-in-cheek humor in the *Tales* movie that made the EC comics so distinctive—but to do that he had to wait another twenty-four years. In a classic, EC-style, what goes around/comes around ending, in late 1965 Francis directed a segment of the *Tales from the Crypt* HBO series called "Last Respects." Working with actresses Emma Samms, Kerry Fox, and Julie Cox, Francis was finally able to be faithful to the campy humor of the originals. "I thought to myself, I deliberately don't do horror films now, but my God, if I could get a script like this and three actresses like these, I'd go back to doing them."



life, condemns him in perpetual thyraxos as containing third corvids his mind is. The role of the hapless, long-suffering husband was played by wash-buckling hero Richard Gere, perhaps best known to U.S. audiences as TV's *Ridin Hood*. The lead murder wife, "Blood Alley" (Tales from the Crypt #10, Feb/Mar '55, drawn by George Evans), is that of the victimism of a group of residents of a Dickensian home for the blind against their cruel overseer. The culture superintendent (Angel Patrick) is literally lashed onto the bus as of a non-detrasteful dilemma by the sergical assassin. The crowd being dismembered by his lullid slaying dog, Brutus, who has been starved by the men, to must walk in a run down an exceedingly narrow corridor lined by the very finest double-edged razor blades (Gore's can offic).

GUNNER LAUGHED TO HIMSELF AS HE STARTED OUT OF HIS CURBLES...

THE FLOOR IS TOO CAREFUL OF I TAKE MY TIME... I'LL NEVER HAVE TO TOUCH THE WALLS... JUST WALK SLOWLY LIVE THIS CAREFUL



In the comic, Evans and Felblain for the reader imagines, the superintendent's gruesome fate. The film took a explicit



Felblain and Gunes were both present at the gala preview of *Book of Horror*, but were disappointed by the result.

Especially enough, none of the segments in the book of Horror films came from the book of Horror comic books.



In 1973, Amicus released a sequel entitled (of course) *Vault of Horror*.

It showcased a first-rate cast that included Tony Danza, Glenn Jones, Camo Ferguson, Deborah Filler, and the Morses, Daniel and Anna—the son and daughter of disappeared character actor Raymond (Dr. Collespe in Richard C. Chamberlain's *The Kidnapping*) Moses.



Head of Horror director Roy Ward Baker worked from Joe Orlando's panels in "Midnight Mass" to block out his scenes.

In "Midnight Mass" (originally from *Tales from the Crypt* #37, Apr/May '53, Feldstein/Ca Kroger), the first *Head of Horror* tale, the sibling Mirseys play (much) brother and sister. After Daniel murders So, he drives out to a vampire restaurant and drinks his jugular topped in a beverage dispenser. "Next Job" (*Shock Spectacles* #1, Feb/Mar '52, Feldstein/Karner) has the Belgery Terry Thomas as a comically ugly man (he was Gaines himself), whose obsession drives his spouse (Glynis Johns) to take extreme measures. After dispatching his wife to the great beyond, she fantastically dismembers his parts and files them in well-labeled jars. "This Truck'll Kill You" (*Tales from the Crypt* #33, Dec/Jan '52, Feldstein/vans & Karner) features a magician (Curt Jurgens) and his assistant (American starlet Dawn Addams, in her last screen appearance) whose quest to obtain a rope trick from a rival eventually results in their own grisly demise. In "Burglar in Death" (*Tales from the Crypt* #28 Feb/Mar '52, Feldstein/Burris), a man who likes his own death in order to talk his insurance company discovers that the joke is on him when he finds himself permanently in the hospital. In "Drawn and Quartered" (*Tales from the Crypt* #26,

Oct/Nov '51, Feldstein/Burris) an artist who had been cheated gets revenge on his enemies by using venison to defigure their portraits, a lion tamed turpentine is spilled on his own self-portrait and he's flustered by a truck.

Head of Horror was directed by Roy Ward Baker, perhaps best known for *A Night to Remember* (1958), a documentary-style film of Walter Lord's book about the sinking of the *Titanic*. *Head* was not as aurally or commercially successful as *Tales*, and Gaines, who had been particularly impressed by the photography of the first film (and was posing considering features' background as a cinematographer), was reportedly unhappy with it. He did, however, share the proceeds he received from the production of both films with the artist and writers of that time — something he was under no legal obligation to do. He even sent money to Harvey Kurtzman, who'd worked very little in horror games, however, thought he owed him a percentage since he'd been third in command at EC at the time.

Broadly enough, *Tales from the Crypt* was not the first film made from an EC comic. In 1956, Al Feldstein went to an art movie house in New York and watched in fascination as one of his stories, "Gone Fishing" (*Head of Horror* #22), unrolled as a French produced short film called *The Fisherman*. Feldstein called Gaines and said, "Hey, Bob, we've been ripped off." Perhaps mindful of his early untheatrical adaptation experiences with Ray Bradbury and Bradbury's gentlemanly response, Gaines contacted the producers — what he was after was less financial compensation than proper recognition. Eventually the producers added an "adapted from EC Comics" credit and gave both Feldstein and Gaines a cup of the film

Glynis Johns' role as a murderer and spouse dismemberer in a medical department from her portrayal of Mrs. Barlow, the sweet but dirty calligrapher mother in *Mary Poppins*.



A Boondoggle Made in Heaven



The release of *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror* corresponded with the crest of a tidal wave of new interest in EC comics, a wave generated in large measure by the activities of the fan-addicts.

Throughout the mid- to late 1960s, Russ Cochran and Bill Gaines played out their own version of *Some Time, Some War* as Cochran's partner in New York, usually for the physics teacher's convention, became an annual affair instead of attending lectures and seminars. Cochran the physics professor and Gaines the almost-chemistry teacher played books together. On one of these boondoggles, Cochran caught sight of some original EC artwork, which Gaines had pulled from the archives for the 1971 book *Horror Comics of the 1950s*, also called *The EC Horror Library* (Nostalgia Press), published by Woodruff Cochran and edited by Bob Stewart (one of the earliest fan-addicts) and Ron Barlow. Cochran was struck by how much better the artwork looked in its original oversized form and asked permission from Gaines to put out a large portfolio, about the size of a tabloid newspaper, containing some of the most outstanding examples of EC artwork.

Gaines happily consented, and the physics professor was quickly in the publishing business. Cochran's *EC Portfolio* (the first of six) came out in 1971. By 1977 he had reproduced 27 issues and 29 stories. Selling them at comic book conventions all over the country, Cochran demonstrated a real market for EC artwork. In addition



In these Gospel-Masters posters (above) and Cochran's portfolios (right), artists' drawings that had not been visible on the cheaply printed comic books emerged. These posters and portfolios are now collectors' items.



In 1953, the first East Coast Comics reprint size comic which would have been the first issue of EC's fourth horror title. Games was planning to re-entertain *Crypt of Terror* (the original title of *Tales from the Crypt*), but when censorship problems became oppressive, he published the contents in the last issue from the *Crypt* in 1955.



to Cochran's portfolios and the 'Nostalgia Press' book, there was a *House of Four* poster separate (published by Cochran), duplicate versions of the old E.C. Fan-Addict kits, put out by Dave Gibson (1971), more posters published by Graph Masters (Bruce Herbenston and Ron Barlow), and *E.C. Classic Reprints* (1974-75), published by East Coast Comics — another Barlow and Herbenston venture.

Barlow and Herbenston also collaborated on an event that amounted to an EC reunion, 1972 E.C. Fan-Addict Convention... The corresponding pair rented a ballroom in New York's Hotel McAlpin for Memorial Day weekend and invited Games, Feldman, all the EC artists, and anyone else who had been directly or tangentially involved with EC fandom. Amazingly enough, they all showed up (except Graham Ingels). A registration fee of \$3.50 bought you access to the dealers' rooms, seminars with the artists, a screening of the new British *Tales from the Crypt* movie, and Harvey Kurtzman's home movies of the 1953 EC Halloween party and boat cruise.

What happened, of course, was true bonding — the hands that wrote the stories and drew the artwork shook the hands of the fans who loved it. People who had been speaking to one another by phone for years finally met face-to-face. As Russ Cochran recalls, "I remember there was as much as I was. We all had a total immersion in EC comics for four days. It was fabulous."

The 1972 convention was the Woodstock of Tales from the Crypt.



The convention proved that old EC gospel — what goes around, comes around. With the Vault Keeper giggling over *Suburban of the Amusement Zone* disregarded as a serious work, and new Wally Wood artwork for the brochure, the convention proved that Peterrohr's Revenge was at hand.



The Complete Reprints

In 1978, after having successfully put out six portfolios, Russ Cochran was no longer content to publish merely highlights or bits and pieces of the EC oeuvre. He now wanted to go after the complete works. With Gaines' authorization, he began publishing the entire EC library, from the pre-*Real* comics like *Crossed*, *Miss Galt*, and *The Spirit* (come through the horror and science-fiction titles, *MAD* as a comic, as spinoff. *Plus*, the short-lived *New Dimension* comics like *Acid High* and *Phony*), all the way to the ill-fated *Adult* *Private*-*Private*. The first volumes, the complete *Wolf* *Science*, appeared in 1979; the last were published in 1996.

Cochran published his comics in handsomely bound hardcover volumes in an oversized format. Except for the covers, which were in full color, the interiors were in black and white so that the artists' line work, obscured in the original size by the smaller size and cheap printing quality, would be more visible. Gaines gave Cochran access to the originals in the Second Avenue vault in

preparing the reprints. Printed on quality paper, the comics appeared almost exactly as they had in the 1940s, with the addition of commentary and anecdotes by Cochran and other fan-scholars, including Rhob Stewart and Spike Jonz editor John Benson, among others. Some of this explanatory text had originally appeared in *Spoof* *First*; Cochran supplemented this information with additional material from Harb Jacobs' 1973 biography of Bill Gaines, which had been published by former EC business manager Lyle Stuart.

Cochran, however, did not print directly from the artists' originals. Instead, he and Gaines had the artwork meticulously photographed, and the books were prepared from slides. Once this task was accomplished, Bill Gaines felt that he could finally part with the now quarter-century-old original illustration boards.

Russ Cochran resigned as head of the Decker University physics department and bought a vintage building in his old hometown of West Plains, which has become the capital of a thriving business in EC hardcover reprints.

The Comic Art Auctions

Gones asked Cochran to handle the job's. His first 15 comic book auctions were held in 1979.

When they began, no one quite knew what to expect for Cochran's auctions, but demonstrated that a book market existed for original comic art. Bill Gaines had caught another wave, this time one of nostalgia.

Why were the auctions so successful in the early 1980s? It was a time when the United States was taking its lumps internationally. The *Watergate* had taken the reins of power in Iran, terrorist incidents in the Middle East were frequent, and the U.S. seemed powerless to cope with them. The Nihilists were thinking their noses at us in Nicaragua. Americans in second markets desired Detroit for less expensive and better made Hondas and Toyotas. More prosperous citizens sought Cadillac and Chrysler in lieu of Buicks and Mercedes. In household products, Sony and Panasonic seemed venerable. American brands like RCA, GE, and Schlager or everything from TVs to toaster ovens. We forked hamburgers and meat loaf for yuppies, then like radioactive anagala, goat cheese, and respiratory cigarettes, became "everyone knew" that the world's best income came from France and Italy.

As it became tough to name more than five things that America still did better than anyone else in the world, naturally enough we began looking back to a simpler time, when U.S. preeminence was undisputed. Although it had been a Broadway musical the 1978 movie *Gone with the Wind* and Olivia Newton-John, epitomized the affection that people held for the Fourth of July—even those who were too young to remember it firsthand. From the comparative sales of the early 1980s, it was

easy to don rose-colored glasses and gloss over the dark and sour. Schornhauf and the comic-art watchlits in order to recall the people, shirts, the T-shirts, cleavage, and *Footloose*.

In the early '80s, Buicks and Porsches looked back fondly on their deep-pitting scuffs as they plucked their fringed hats, and were prosperous enough to buy some of their childhood back. Yard sales, tag sales, and flea markets proliferated as the collectibles basin continued. Like *Footloose* and *101 Doves*, comic books were part of the "great stuff" that people remembered about the 1960s. The film version of *Splash*, starring Christopher Reeve, came out in the same year as *Gone*, and demonstrated the enduring popularity of the Man of Steel. As comic book art progressed to sketches, eventually *Waltels*'s distinguished auction house took over the auctions from Ross Cochran, with longtime *Ironclad* and former *Spide* *Book Culture* Jerry West serving as house consultant.

The Stage Is Set

All of it was a remarkable transformation. From 1996 to 1983, *Waltels* from the Crypt had returned from a drag on the market to a cult favorite to a hot collectible property. The stage was set for the next step, the return of *Waltels from the Crypt* and the reintroduction of the Crypt Keeper to television audiences.

Neuro-Ghoulswyn-Mayhem, here I come! I'm ready for my grass-up, Mr. Silver. Heh, heh, heh.



As Gaines released the original art for sale, Ross Cochran prepared catalogs and sent them to interested collectors.

Like its comic book predecessor, the HBO series *Tales from the Crypt* is a labor of love. Since its inception, many top actors and directors have worked for scale just to be involved in the grisly glee. Before it could become a labor of love, however, it was a labor of persistence and determination. In an industry where getting anything made is difficult, it took the influence and backing of five of the most powerful figures in Hollywood to bring *Tales from the Crypt* to television.

A STAR IS... EXHUMED

TALES RESURRECTED ON TV

The reason people love *Tales from the Crypt* is that they're funny and they're gruesome. They're like a guilty pleasure that appeals to the dark side, the murderous rage that every human has in them. They give you a healthy outlet to take pleasure in that fantasy, a pleasure we all enjoy, even though we don't want to admit it.

That's what Gaines and Feldstein did in the comic books, and that's what we wanted translated very specifically to the screen. The episodes had to be stylish, full of irony and satire and black humor, and a lot of that humor comes from the fact that there were characters who had absolutely no redeeming value — the more despicable the characters, the better. At the very first screening when we unveiled the first three episodes, Joel Silver stood up and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is *Tales from the Crypt*.

This is **not** *Tales from Sesame Street*."

—Robert Zemeckis



First There Were Two

Director and Take executive producer Walter Hill grew up reading the originals: "I was a great fan of EC comics when I was a kid—much to the disdain of my mother," he remembers fondly. "I used to collect them. I was about twelve when they got into trouble with Senator McClellan and the committee, but I still loved them. One of my ambitions was to get into the comic book world. It was everything I wanted to do. I thought it would be a great life to make up these wild stories, write them, and draw them."

After on becoming a cartoonist, Hill briefly embarked on a course of study at the University of the Americas in Mexico City, but returned to the States and settled for a degree in English instead. For several years he dabbled in and out of documentary film work before becoming the second assistant

director on *Bullitt* (1968), where he found himself responsible for civilian safety during the landmark breakfast chase sequence through the streets of San Francisco. After writing McQueen's hit film *The Getaway* (1972), he landed his first directing assignment, an action movie called *Hard Times* (1973), starring Chuckles, Beeson and James Coburn. Since that time Hill has directed action films in a wide variety of settings, most notably the Nick Nolte/Patrick Murphy buddy pics *48 HRS.* and *Another 48 Hrs.*, and *The Long Walk*.

His film *The Warriors* (1979), which he calls "a comic book version of Xenophon's story" set amidst the gang turf wars of New York, was falsely blamed for a wave of violent episodes in theaters that accompanied the screenings (an accusation that in many ways paralleled the hunt for the original EC comics for its causing juvenile delinquency). Hill also produced the three best office humor/science fiction successes (*1001 Alices*, and *Alien*), and is working on bringing a fourth *Alice* to the screen. His most recent film is *Last Man Standing*, starring Bruce Willis and Bruce Dern.

Hill was directing features at Universal in the early 1980s when he became aware of Russ Cochran's backdoor reprints of the old EC comics, and sent off for a complete set.

When they arrived, he found that they were as enjoyable as they'd been in his childhood. From his adult perspective as a director, however, he now realized that the stories also contained a wealth of material that would translate well to the screen. He showed them to his partner, writer/director/producer David Giler (*The Black Cat*, *Fox with Dick & Jane*, *Parodies First* and, with Hill, the *Alien* series). Like Hill, Giler had commented them outly as a kid, and now viewed them with an eye toward their cinematic potential. He liked what he saw: "Walter came to me and said, 'I think we should buy these.' I said, 'I think so too,'" he recalls.



David Giler produced the 1974 thriller *The Parodies First*, directed by Alan J. Pakula and starring Warren Beatty.



Walter Hill's *48 HRS.*, starring Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy, put a new twist on the buddy* picture.

It was hideously clever of the five executive-prod-owners to bring me back to life, don't you think?



Russ Cochran's hardcover EC reprints inspired Hill and Giler to bring *Take* from the Crypt to the screen.

Hill had picked out "The Man Who Was Death" as his premiere segment long before *Sale*, from the *Crypt* debuted on HBO.



Then There Were Three

In 1983, Hill and Galen were working with Joel Silver on *Street of Fire* when Silver spotted Hill's *Sale* reports: "Something clicked." "I told Walter that we should do an anthology feature film based on *Sale* from the *Crypt*," Silver recalls.

He was preaching to the choir—Hill already had his favorite all picked out: "I know exactly what segment I want to direct," he told Silver enthusiastically. "There's this one great story that I love called 'The Man Who Was Death' [*Crypt* #17]. It's about a guy who's an executioner who thinks that people are real wimpy when they scream, 'I don't want to die!' Then he goes off on his own—sort of a do-it-yourself death squad—and starts killing people who've been 'getting away with murder.' When he gets caught he starts screaming, 'I don't want to die!'"

"I thought it sounded great," recalls Silver. "I called my attorney to see if we could acquire the rights. The three of us bought an option from Bill Gaines. It cost us very little." Gaines was willing to let the option go relatively inexpensively because he knew he was dealing with some of Hollywood's major players. "When we made our contact with Gaines," recalls Walter Hill, "it all went very smoothly because I think he assisted us with high-class movie-making. Before this he'd always been dealing with people who just wanted to make horror movies."

One More Makes Four

"Nothing happened for more than a year," continues Hill. "Finally Joel called back and told me that Richard Donner was interested. He wanted to know if it was okay to bring him into the project, which was fine by me."

Donner began his career as an actor, but switched to directing with segments of the Steve McQueen television series *Hunted: Desperate Hours*. After directing a number of movies for television, he moved into the horror genre with the highly successful feature *The Omen* (1976).

Donner was a teenager—smack in the heart of Gaines' target audience—during the heyday of the original crime books. They went through a lot of Evertaches in his family—he was a charter member of the flashlight-under-the-blanket brigade. The ECs stuck in his mind into adulthood, and formed part of a deep respect for comic books that he carried into his work.

One of his most successful films was *Supernova* (1978), a project he took on out of a sense of obligation to do right by an American room and a devotion to Truth, Justice, and the American Way—104 to mention "white bread, apple pie, and hot sandwiches" he adds with a grin. "In all seriousness, though, I directed *Supernova*



Richard Donner directed all three blockbuster Mel Gibson/Danny Glover *Lethal Weapon* films, which he coproduced with Joel Silver.

"I sometimes say that one of my first ambitions was to do comic books. Now I've achieved it."

—Walter Hill

because I felt that an American tradition was about to be destroyed. Russian producers who lived in Costa Rica were going to make the film in Italy—with an English director. They had an idea who Superman was—he was just a red cape to them. I stepped up and volunteered. After they offered me the opportunity, I reread the script—I changed everything. Sure it was wanting to do a big picture with Marlon Brando and Gene Hackman, but I really wanted to take it away from them because they had no idea what they were doing. It could have been a travesty. I was raised on Superman, and I really felt like I was salvaging a piece of American heritage.”



To honor Donner, we agreed to direct Superman in order to say that Superman's onscreen persona matched his comic book heritage.

Donner made the first of Silver's calls, at Hill's quarters in 1999, when he was writing the first *Lothal Report*. (Since that one, there have been two his superb.) “Just as I was doing the trades this little GMAQ came home, during a break, on late-night coverage and he said, ‘I got this project. I want to do—*Tales from the Crypt*.’”

“Of course I still remembered it, and I offered to help. Just pick up the option. I had no idea what our script was going to be on here, it would evolve, and there were times when everyone near and dear to me,” he said, “Don’t put any more of your names in this project,” but I stuck with it.”

The Quintet Is Complete

The last person Joel Silver brought into the Crypt was Robert Zemeckis, who like Silver was too young to have been caught up in EC comics in childhood. “I came into Bill Gaines’ world through *MAD* magazine in the 1960s,” recalls Zemeckis. “I became a real fan while I was in film school at USC. That was where I met Bob Cole, my long-time writing partner. He was a comic book aficionado and a major EC buff, and he was the one who eventually introduced me to them.”

A Chicago native, Zemeckis grabbed the attention of Steven Spielberg with his student film *Field of Vision*. In 1978 he directed his first feature film, *Flying Hell* (the *Head*, the story of a group of teenagers who embark on an odyssey to go see the Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show. After writing 1991’s *Back to the Future* for Spielberg and directing *Used Cars* (1996), he had his first major hit with *Remember the Titans* in 1998, a success he immediately followed with *Back to the Future* the following year.

Zemeckis connected with Silver in 1998 when he convinced him to do a self-parody cameo—as a stereotypical screaming director—in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* “While we were filming, Joel mentioned that he was working on getting EC comics on cable, and I thought that was a smart way to do it. I knew *Tales from the Crypt* would never succeed on network television. They’d run it if it was going on cable. I told him I was interested.”

With the addition of Zemeckis, the quintet was complete and Silver finally had enough firepower to pitch the idea to HBO. Things moved quickly from there: “I hadn’t heard much in about a year, then suddenly there was a phone call from Joel,” recalls Baker. Hill with a smile, picking up the story. It was a three-way, one-on-one conversation with Silver. “Just get on the phone and say ‘Bob-Zemeckis-wants-to-direct-and-Dick-Donner-will-do-ome-and-HBO-is-sure-excel-and-will-welcome-you-sign-up-in-five-days.’” When Hill said yes, Silver hung up, and a project which had been on the back burner since Ronald Reagan hit the ground running in his first term in office was suddenly red hot.

Donner was a charter member of the flashlight-under-the-blanket brigade. EC gave him a deep respect for comic books that he carried into his work.



Robert Zemeckis' *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, a seamless mix of the action and animation sequences, was an homage both to cartoons and to film noir.

Joel Silver: The Spark Plug

A film devotee since childhood, Joel Silver attended NYU film school and broke into Hollywood as an assistant to producer Lawrence Gordon. Gordon already had a relationship with Silver's future *Tales* partner, director Walter Hill, having worked with him on *Hard Times* (1975, Hill's directorial debut). Silver's first project with Gordon was Hill's feature *The Driver* (1978). He was also associate producer on Hill's next film, *The Warriors* (1979). After working on the Burt Reynolds hits *The End and Hooper* (both 1978), he and Gordon produced the next three Hill features—*48 Hrs.*, *Streets of Fire*, and *Brewster's Millions*.

In 1985, Silver established his own production company, Silver Pictures, and was responsible for some of the most commercially successful films of the 1980s and 1990s, including *Commando* (1985) and *Predator* (1987), starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, with Whoopi Goldberg (1986), three *Lethal Weapons* featuring Mel Gibson and Danny Glover (1987, 1989, 1992), two *Die Hards* (1988, 1990), starring Bruce Willis, and *Executive Decision* (1996). The *Lethal Weapon* trilogy began his association with another fellow *Tales* executive-producer, director Richard Donner.

Joel Silver was a toddler when Bill Gaines was standing up for his comics before Estes Kefauver and the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency. "The comics were already out of print when I was in my formative years, but sometimes you get lucky when you went to camp or slept over at somebody's house," recalls Silver. "Often the kid's older brother had some. You went through the collection and if you found one you'd pull it out and say, 'I gotta read this —' they were like some kind of forbidden fruit. Everyone knew they weren't ordinary comic books."

Once he got to Hollywood, he kept bumping into them, and one of the biggest bumps was Walter Hill's *Alien*. "I saw a rough cut of the film and was totally blown away by one particular scene," says Silver. "Something had planted eggs in the host, the eggs grew and an alien came bursting out of the guy's chest. It was so startling to me, and I remember talking about how much I liked it with Walter, who told me that the original idea came from an old comic book called *Tales from the Crypt*."

In 1982, horror virtuoso George Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*) filmed *Creepshow*, an homage to the old EC comics that was based on Stephen King's stories, not on the comics themselves. Between his boyhood recollections and later Hollywood contacts, Silver became aware that the EC stories were "out there." Then he saw Hill's reports, and began putting the deal together that brought *Tales from the Crypt* to life.

Joel Silver made his directorial debut on *Tales from the Crypt*. His episode was entitled "Split Personality," and starred Joe Pesci as a con man who romances a brace of wealthy twins but deludes them into believing that he has a twin brother, Fred Dekker wrote the script, as he had for the premiere episode, "And All Through the House." Often described as the "consummate producer," Silver knew to surround himself with experienced personnel on his maiden voyage as a director. "I wanted the best people I could get, and I had the 'A' team with me," he says with a smile. "In addition to Dekker, David Lowery was my storyboard artist—he later did *Jurassic Park*. Jan De Bont was my cameraman, who went on to direct *Speed* and *Twister*."

Silver's initial outing was well received, but he decided that he much preferred producing, and "Split Personality" remains his sole directing credit.



Joel Silver's "A Team" for his directorial debut on *Tales from the Crypt* included cinematographer Jan De Bont (above), who had served as director of photography for Silver on *Die Hard*, and Academy Award-nominee actor Joe Pesci (right), who had appeared in Silver's *Lethal Weapon II* and *III*.



"Joel is a very entrepreneurial fellow," says Hill. "The fact that there is a show is really nice, because of his entrepreneurial efforts than any other factor."

"Joel Silver would have been one helluva running back in the NFL," laughs Richard Donner in concurrence. "Once Joel got the ball, forget it. He just took this thing and ran with it."

Getting Gaines' Blessing

First, however, the partners had to convince Bill Gaines. "We had to go back and restructure the agreement," says Hill. "The original contract with Gaines was a feature deal, and he had to be persuaded that HBO was a good way to go."

The idea of an anthology feature film was a dead end on any number of grounds, almost all of which were financial. There had been a flurry of interest in making the movie at one studio, but they wanted to take it out of the hands of the originators and make it as a low-budget film, which was a deal-breaker. Worse yet, recent anthology films with a horror theme, including Stephen King's *Crepuscule* and the ill-fated *Twilight Zone*,¹ had not performed well at the box office. Whether or not there was any real similarity between *Crepuscule* and *Twilight Zone* and *Tales from the Crypt*, studios were not gun-shy of making a horror anthology for theatrical release.

Gaines agreed that the *Tales* material was too strong for network TV. If a feature was not feasible, cable was his only real opportunity. Besides, cable offered one advantage that a feature film could never match—a chance that all the stories might eventually be filmed. He gave his okay.

The production company ordered multiple copies of Russ Cochran's EC reprints. Some segments follow the comics more closely than others, but the Gaines agreement stipulates that all episodes of *Tales* must originate from the stories that appeared in EC horror comics.

The *Tales* production company also bought the reprints of the EC's science-fiction comics, and in the wake of the success of *Tales from the Crypt*, a new cable TV series based on *Wood Science* and *Wood Fantasy* is in the works for 1997. Because *Wood Science* has already been used as the title of a feature film (oddly enough, it was one that Joel Silver produced), the new series will be called *Proteusians of Science*.



Into Production

With Donner, Hill, and Zemeckis attached and committed to direct the first three episodes—the "trilogy" as it's known within the *Tales* production company—Silver found that selling the idea to HBO was pretty much a slam dunk. When the green light finally came, however, the timing, of course, was terrible. "Zemeckis had just released *Major Dumb*," remembers Silver. "He was about to start shooting *Back to the Future II* and *III* at the same time. He was going to be unavailable for about a year. He told me, 'If you want me to do this, I've got to do it right now.' This was roughly December of 1988. Donner and I didn't have any time either—we were in the midst of shooting *Lethal Weapon II*."



Four of the five *Tales* from the Crypt executive producers (from left, Richard Donner, Joel Silver, Robert Zemeckis, and Walter Hill) pose with their newly enhanced *Tales from the Crypt* Keepers, David Cohen, the fifth member of the quintet, as shown above.

I was reincarnated in all my gruesome glory on slay-ble TV. My show introduced me to a new de-generation of fans, but wazy still dismembered me from my comic book days.



¹ *Twilight Zone* and two other series were killed on a test-screening during filming.

Setting the Tone — The First Episodes

Despite the time crunch, all of the partners realized immediately that the first few episodes would be crucial because they would set the mood for the entire series, and they all participated in its creation. "The early seasons established a level of quality that set the benchmark for what was to follow," says Bob Zemeckis. For the series premiere, Zemeckis had selected "And All Through the House" (based on *Harriet #23*) and wanted to do it with his wife, actress Mary Ellen Trainor, in the lead.

Throughout the preparation and the filming, he worked closely with Fred Dekker, who wrote the script, pointing it to make sure it was faithful to the original story. "I wanted to start fresh — I didn't want it to look like we were trying to remake the prior film (which had featured Joan Collins as the matriarch). I went back to the

comic book — there were lots of images that I wanted to evoke or replicate, including the first image with Santa Claus." (The homicidal St. Nick was played by Larry Drake, best known to TV audiences as *LA Law*'s simple soul Benny, the office boy.)

The producers sent it off to Bill Guttentag for his assessment. "Guttentag gave me just one comment when he read the screenplay," laughs Zemeckis. "He said, 'My only note is that she's got to be screaming her head off at the end.' We took that to heart and in the last scene Mary Ellen gave us one of the greatest on-screen screams ever."

Walter Hill finally got his chance to film "The Man Who Was Death" early in 1989. "In addition to doing a movie about

someone he calls "a twisted human being," he was anxious to try a technique he'd never been able to do in film. "I wanted the character to talk to the camera," he declares. "It's an old technique that I'd seen many times when I was a kid."

Casting a performer who could address the audience directly gave him some problems. "I kept reading actors and I didn't feel anybody really caught the flavor of it. I was in despair. Then Bill Sauter came in. He was great. I said, 'If you can do this exactly the way you did it just now, I'll give you the lead.'"

Sauter, a real *Tales* fan from the *Captain* "Bird of the House," starred in the first *Tales* feature *Deuce*. Knight, had a part in *The Street* II (produced by Joel Silver), and also played the lead in Hill's 1989 feature, *Topless*, which was written by Bob Zemeckis and his writing partner Bob Cole.

Richard Donner, the only *Tales* producer with a TV background, swapped the last scene in *Letal Weapon II* late on a Wednesday night in March of 1989. He began shooting his critical *Tales* suggestion, "Dig That Cat... He's Real Gone," last thing Thursday morning. He intentionally shot the segment "like panels of a comic book. We did the entire show with extreme wide-angle lenses, deliberately distorting people."



Richard Donner frames a shot from his first episode, "Dig That Cat... He's Real Gone." Donner is the only *Tales* producer who had prior experience directing for television.



At William Guttentag's suggestion, director Robert Zemeckis coached a bloodcurdling scream from Mary Ellen Trainor in the closing scene of "And All Through the House."

Walter Hill offered Bill Sauter the lead in "The Man Who Was Death" only if he would perform it exactly as he had for the audition.



The luncheon in or unorthodoxy of it was hard to deal with, at least in first. "I was working with a young editor, and after his first cut, I really thought I was going to have to replace him. Instead I said to him, 'I want you to go back into the editing room and do everything you were trained not to do.' I think of all the bizarre things you thought but never said to all those old farts when you were learning—that nobody has any sense of style, initiative, inventiveness in cutting a film—and do that." He came back two days later and showed me another cut. It was sensational and totally nonconformist, with a lot of jump-cuts. It had a marvelous comic-book sensibility and it was exactly what I wanted."

With their three inaugural segments, directors Hill, Zemeckis, and Donner set the mood and the standard for the rest of the episodes.

They also established the wide range of possibility for others to follow. "Bob was uninterested in things that go bump in the night," says *Tales* associate producer Alex Giffert. "Walter has always had a little bit of a darker,

psychological edge, and Dick wanted to do something that had a wild, lighter tone." Taken together, they showed the directors who followed them that the work could be gaudy and dark, a classic thriller, or wild and way-out-there, with comic overtones.

Once the boundaries had been established, keeping the rest of the series on track was a task that fell primarily to Joel Silver. "Joel is very hands-on," says Walter Hill. "The overall tone of the show has a lot to do with Joel's taste. He selected what shows got made. He decided who got which scripts." In that regard Silver functioned the way Gaines and Feldstein had in the days of the early comics—he matched the material to the creative talent.

"All producing is casting," says Silver firmly, "whether it's casting in front of the camera or behind it. You have to put the players together and make it work. We're always a bit frantic. Sometimes it's a miracle that these episodes come together as well as they do, but the reason they turn out so well is the genius of Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein. The stories are so perfect that they manage to live through whatever occurs, and they survive and succeed."



The *Tales* lead-in, with its camp, creepy Danny Elfman theme song and helter-skelter jaunt through a haunted house, has become almost as much of a trademark of the series as the Crypt Keeper himself. Silver and the other executive producers pushed for a top-notch opening sequence because they knew they'd have to live with it "forever."

Inviting the Audience into the Crypt

The partners understood that the opening sequence had to establish a "Cryptic" tone immediately. Like the splash pages of a comic book story, the lead-in to the series was designed to have a signature feel, one that would physically bring the viewer into the Crypt. This was accomplished through a point of view that approximates walking into a haunted house with a hand-held camera or VCR.

Actually, however, the haunted house is about the size of the 18th hole on a miniature golf course. The lilliputian Victorian mansion was created by Richard Feldman's effects studio, Boss Film. An alumnus of George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic who began as

Americans have always felt more comfy with a host or guru to guide them through the chills of horror stories, a tradition that dates back to the days of crystal sets and Arch Oboler's *Light Out*. At about the same time that Wertham's crusade was bearing down on Gaines, Feldstein, and the three Ghoulomatics, a new late-night TV show premiered in Los Angeles

The Horror Host

The program was nothing more than a collection of old horror movies—*The Million Dollar Man* with a very limited library—but it was hosted by a convulsively weird sporting three-inch black nails and a shifty black dress. In a good gallop of Peter Pan collars and poodle skirts, it fit in like an Ice Landlady and emphasized her own edgy hair age.

She called herself Vampira. According to David Skiff in *The Horror Show*, Mada Narum, the woman who persuaded her, claimed the Dragon Lady in *It* and the Pirate, the evil queen in Disney's *Snow White*, and short film vamp Theda Bara as her inspirations. However, Vampira's closest "living" relative is almost undoubtedly Donald the affable homicide sub-kick that Johnny Cougar created in the *Vamp* series. Since that time, female vampire costume has not evolved significantly—both *The Munsters* and *Monty Python's* apparently used Donald's choker-like. More camp than vamp, contemporary horror hostess Flona (Cassandra Peterson) is also a direct descendant.

Vampira was followed by other TV movie horror messes. The most successful was perhaps Roland in Philadelphia, the "Card Ghost" who presided over



Mark Theatre. Eventually he moved up to a bigger market, New York, and worked under his own name, Zachary.

When original horror and thriller programming appeared on television with *After Dark* and *Thriller* and *The Twilight Zone*, Hitchcock and writer Rod Serling were present to introduce each segment. Hitchcock in particular had a dual plan for presenting himself with a prop in costume that matched the theme of the episode. When *Sleeze from the Crypt* was coming on line at HBO, there was no question that the *Crypt* keeper would host the program. The only question was what form he would take.

Because of more commitments, Bob Zemeckis' first episode, "And All Through the House," was already in the can before the *Crypt* Keeper was developed. HBO liked what they saw, but "they were very concerned about a host," remembers Joel Silver. "In those days even Michael Lerner was having the Sunday night Disney series, the way Walt used to do it."

Silver reassured them that a *Crypt* keeper was in development. With a commitment for six shows (up from the original three), the production company could afford to amortize the cost of the keeper and come up with something really, artistic.

*Look at me in the limelight—
I'm the new Dead Sullivan,
bigger than Malice-ter Crook!*



“Bob, Walter, Dick, and I, plus others involved in production, began having meetings about what he should look like,” continues Silver. “We felt the Keeper was very important. It was the idea of a dead hero was even more interesting than having a live one—most of them are dead anyway.”

Animation execs (script/producer Kevin Yagher brought the *Crypt Keeper* to us life). Quite by chance, Yagher, who had created *Clucky*, the evil doll in *Cluckin' Bluck*, ran into Joel Silver while returning home from his storage facility in Glendale. Silver, who also had material stashed there, was intrigued when he glimpsed Yagher's monster snarl in the open locker and eventually asked him to work on the *Crypt Keeper*.

Bob Zemeckis worked closely with Yagher to hone his persona even before work began on his playmate. “We talked a lot about the

It’s as if he’s flipping everyone off from the grave.” Which makes the *Crypt Keeper*, in a way, the Ultimate Mocker.

After meeting with Zemeckis, Yagher did some personality sketches, then moved into clay mockups. What followed were a series of colorful discussions between Yagher and the execs: more producers about the physiology of the *Crypt Keeper*—discussions also to denigrate sessions of Mr. Pua’atitral, with Yagher trying out various facial features on the basic design and producers trying to determine which were essential and which were superfluous. It was definitely a case of Less Is More—as the *Crypt Keeper* shed hair, lips, and teeth, his identity was crystallized and distilled. In his first incarnation he sported a prominent hook nose. Like a plastic surgeon with a rhinoplasty pattern, Yagher tried about half a dozen noses on the

“You know... you don't necessarily have to have a nose.”

—Richard Zemeckis



After spending his first couple of seasons in a conservative cloak, the *Crypt Keeper* became more audacious in his choice of apparel, playing dress-up as Forrest Gump (left), Uncle Sam (center), and Elvis (right).

Crypt Keeper's personality traits before I started shaping him,” says Yagher. “We built a whole back story for him, about why he’s got that snake look and those piercing pale blue eyes. We talked about his breath stinking and the rotting pieces falling off him, which inspired me more than any visual you could ever have. I learned a lot about building a character in the process. The *Crypt Keeper* is likable, but he’s also sly and great hit out—if you wanted your back on him, he’d just plunge a knife into you!”

“He’ll make you laugh, but he may also kill you. He’s this little asshole.”

says Zemeckis with a grin. “But he’s dead, so he doesn’t care what anyone thinks of him—he can say anything he wants to. His attitude is, ‘What are you gonna do—kill me?’

Keeper. When Zemeckis suggested that perhaps a nose was extraneous, Yagher carved an indentation into the smooth surface of the clay model and found consensus—almost.

Writer Hill and David Gale, who had won a brace of special effects Oscars for the red lens, had envisioned a hero who was a bit more hirsute/spry. Hill is particular: thought he might be like British actor James Mason (sharking back, perhaps, to Ralph Richardson’s portrayal in the films of the 70s). Neither one was quite prepared for the final visage Yagher created. “We looked at it and said, ‘Oh my God!’” laughs Gale. “But we were wrong. It made the show.”

“Without the *Crypt Keeper*,” says Richard Donner, “I don’t think we would have had a series. We would have had a comic book anthology and nothing. The audience needed a personality to hook on to. He became the connection that made it

work. People tune in to see the Crypt Keeper as much as the stories. He became a trademark, a legend that everyone could relate to."

In addition to making him physically, Yagher was also responsible for finding the voice of the Crypt Keeper: actor/stand-up comedian and *Star Trek* winner John Kassir. Kassir was the voice of Mork, the attachment sitcom on Disney's *Playhouse*, and is the voice of a monkey on USA Network's new series *Johnny Time*, which Kassir developed and produced. Kassir drew upon a medley of sources of inspiration—a handful of Alfred Hitchcock, a lot of Rod Serling, a little Henry Jamesian here and a pinch of Margaret Hamilton there (Margaret Hamilton portrayed the Wicked Witch of the West in the *The Wizard of Oz*). In the end, however, he came up with something all his own: to portray what he calls his "cackling bag of bones."

Yagher auditioned several actors, then brought Kassir's tape to Joel Silver with his endorsement. "What got my attention was John's high-pitched, wicked laugh," recalls Yagher. "He also had the easy 'dick' voice that we were looking for." The gravelly aspect soon became a problem for Kassir—a heavy that sandpaper effect was not sustainable for very long. "John could only go so many minutes," says Yagher, before he had to stop for lots of lemon and honey.

"I have so much fun doing him, but at first my vocal cords were like raw meat. By the time we were done with a session," admits Kassir, "I had to lighten him up a little just to keep going." Kassir notes the keeper not just for the TV series, but for all appearances connected with the *Idle Hands* film, and for the kids' game show that takes place in the Crypt.

For the first two years, the Crypt Keeper appeared as his standard hooded garb—it was not until the third season that he

became those iconic elements in his attire. At the same time, his humor became cheekier and his personality blossomed. "The plans dress-up more," laughs Yagher. "We can put him in sunglasses, on a *Sagarmore* cruise! He's been John Wayne, Bogart, and Brando—and even Howard Stern."

"The Crypt Keeper is a real character, not just a voice or a puppet," says Kassir fondly. "He's evolved, just as a character would in a sitcom. He has grown to enjoy death so much more each year."

The emergence of the Crypt Keeper as a star parallels a period of growth for Yagher himself. With the support and guidance of the *Idle* executive producers, Yagher began directing the "bumpier" segments that open and close the show.

He also directed the pivotal *Idle* episode that chronicled the birth of the Crypt Keeper. Called "Loser Birth," it featured Yagher's brother Jeff, the only actor he knew who'd cheerfully sit still for five hours in Makeup every morning, which is how long it took to outfit him with a second face.

"This has been such a wonderful experience," says Yagher enthusiastically. "They say that when you have dreams of dying you're really enjoying what you're doing during the day—I'd go home from the *Idle* just the Crypt set and dream of dying every night. It's the most fulfilling thing I've ever done."

I'm surrounded by wooden performers... stiffs! My show needs some real hack-tors, genuine scars of the silver scream!

John Kassir, the voice of the Crypt Keeper, has helped his character expand his sense of humor and develop his true personality.



Bringing the Crypt Keeper to Life

It takes six puppeteers to bring the Crypt Keeper's outrageous impudence and his "up yours" demeanor to life. Kevin Yagher has assembled an experienced ensemble troupe, each of whom must operate in concert with their cohorts. They have to think alike and respond in unison.

Many of the puppeteers have been with the Crypt Keeper for a long time—since the days when he still had a nose. Seated behind and underneath the puppet, Vin Snowden works the head and body, with his hand inside the costume. Charles Lutka, who originally worked in Yagher's shop and was part of the team that built the Keeper's head, sits behind Snowden and manipulates the hands and arms. The Crypt Keeper has hair arms that come off the Keeper's shoulder and attach to straps around Lutka's hands, a technique that Jim Henson pioneered with the Muppets. If the legs are visible, another puppeteer works the lower body. The Crypt Keeper can move his ankles and curl his toes.

Four puppeteers work the Crypt Keeper's facial expressions. His head is actually very large and very heavy because it is crammed with twenty-seven servo motors. Servos are small motors well known to hobbyists—little different from the Radio Shack specials that power model cars and airplanes.

Erk Schaper is responsible for the anger. Using four pistons, he controls the cheek and nostril area in the middle of the face. Meckle Heussen operates the eyes and eyelids. There's one puppeteer (David Stannett) responsible just for the smile. He works the c's, b's, and t's—all the letters that cause the corners of your mouth to pull back, and of course for the Crypt Keeper's trademark laugh. Servo motors were not powerful enough to work the smile, which instead is operated manually off ten feet of cable.

"When Bob Zemeckis talked to me about creating the Crypt Keeper, he talked about character, about what a funny, weird little guy he is, how his mouth would lead. That inspired me more than any visual clues," says Yagher. "Then I made a series of sketches, and finally I made a clay head—on which we tried about 30 different noses. Of course, we ended up with no nose."

A crew of eight people from Yagher's studio built the Crypt Keeper. Yagher sculpted the head himself, and worked closely with Bates production to define his ghoulish features.





Brock Winkless is the virtuoso responsible for the jaw and mouth, working from a console connected to his own mandible. As Winkless opens his mouth, the Keeper mimics his action. Winkless also manipulates four paddles on the console to move the lips in sync with the dialogue. He controls four points of movement over each canine tooth, two upper and two lower. Brock is the best lip guy in town," boasts Hughes.



"We have a great time doing the Crypt Keeper live," says John Kasink. For TV, however, he lays down the audio track first. Puppeteers watch Kasink at the microphone and take some of their reaction cues from him as he does his voiceover.



Because his foam latex skin rips (how appropriate!) the Crypt Keeper gets an annual beauty makeover when the show is on hiatus.





The "In" Thing to Do

At one time or another, the executive producers had worked with most of the biggest names in both film and television, and their commitment to the series gave *Sibs from the Crypt* a cachet in the industry that few other television opportunities could match. Although they had planned to call in some old names and ask some well-known "friends" to appear, they quickly discovered that casting and coping were unnecessary—stars and directors were calling *them* and asking for a chance to do a segment. The couch won a crop of one of outstanding talent, both in front of the camera and behind it.

It became a mark of prestige to do a *Sibs from the Crypt*. Among the television and movie luminaries who have appeared on the series are Harry Anderson, Francesca Arino, Bruce Boxleitner, Sissy Bragg, Brian Bridges, Tim Curry, Tansy Dalton, Rhye Danson, Yvonne DeCarlo, Hector Elizondo, Marelle Hennington, Margot Kidder, John Lithgow, Elizabeth McGovern, Ezequiel Montiel, Cathy Moriarty, Lou Diamond Phillips, Michael J. Pollard, Priscilla Presley, Christopher Reeve, Nazaria Richardson, Emma Samms, Martin Short, Brooke Shields, John Sitaros, Richard Thomas, George Takei, Adam West, Thom Williams, and Bart Young.



On *Sibs from the Crypt*, stars such as Brian Murray, Brian Bridges, Tammy Dalton, Sissy Bragg, Elizabeth Richardson, John Lithgow, Kelly Preston, William Bickley, and Sissy Bragg got a chance to stretch themselves in actors and take on one-episode roles—without a lengthy commitment to a project.

The casting reflects a continuation of the series' focus on heritage of the series. Adam West played TV's Batman. DeCarlo portrayed FBI Minister on *The Americans*. Curry was one of the anchors of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and Revo and Snyder (who appeared in separate episodes) played Clark Kent and Lois Lane in *Dinosaur Superheroes*. Much of the rest of

the offbeat genre mystery TV series *Into Darkness*, including Kiki Mic Lullihan, Karren Robertson, Meredith Feltz, Joan Chen, and Grace Zolotorke, have also appeared.

William Butler guided *Into Darkness* during its first two seasons before going on to produce the feature *Passage* and *Mr. DeLoach's Eyes*. Hal Arden has been the series' producer since that time. "I have always had a large interest in the creative community in working on the show," recalls Butler. "We were casting 'Dead Right' with Howard Deutch (*Party in Party*) directing. We were looking for the perfect person, and I continued to try that the role was made made for Demi Moore. Joel Kinnaman Bauer and Dennis Quaid still. He called her and she agreed to do it. I was stunned that she was going to do a television show, but I was even more stunned to have good it was. On the set there was a real sense that there was something very unusual and wonderful that was happening. Demi just nailed her character, and she was great to work with." Moore played a waitress who married a bit strangely man because a fortune teller predicted that he would inherit a fortune and then kick the bucket.

Among the most distinguished actors to work on *Into Darkness* is the dapper legend Berk Douglas. When the possibility first presented itself, they wrote those who suggested that appearing on a cable TV show was

The Into Darkness executive producers may have the biggest Rolodex in Hollywood. Stars appearing in various episodes include actors who have worked with one or more of the producers previously, those who have worked with the director of a particular episode, and those who are breaking a mold — making a choice to do something they've always wanted to do. From the top, among those who have joined in the fun are Christopher Reeve, West End, Kacey Smeal, Lee Arenberg, Emma Samers, Ellen Barkin, Teri Garr, Andrew McCarthy, Mariel Hemingway, Traci Trill, Colleen Camp, Harry Anderson, Andrea Lindbergh, M Emmet Walsh, Yvonne DeCarlo, Carol Kane, Natasha Richardson, and Laine Kazan.



Because of the great variety of plots and story lines in *Tales from the Crypt*, stars and personalities could find almost any kind of bizarre or desirable character to play. *Tales* episodes have featured Roger Daltrey, Lou Thesz, Cassanova O'Ware, Ed Begley, Jr., Russ Lewis, Horton Dowling, Jr., George Formik, Sugar Ray Leonard, Bam Young & Joe Peary, Dan Aykroyd & Kirk Douglas, Judi Nelson & Meat Loaf, Iggy Pop, Jim Kerwin & Sandra Bernhard, Ben Badier & Richard Lewis, Herbie Hancock, John Astin, Tom Williams, Brooke Shields, and Don Rickles, and Robert Goldstein, both of whom are shown with "Marty."

"I wish him," Douglas diagnosed and jumped into the Crypt with enthusiasm. "It goes back to the old saying, 'There are no small parts, only small actors,'" states Douglas simply. "Back in, when all the studio heads were saying, 'No one is to go on television. I was one of the first movie stars who worked in TV. I did a live street from *Clashin'* with my costar, Marilyn Maxwell. My *Tales* segment, called 'Yellow,' was directed by Robert Zemeckis. Dan Aykroyd was in it, who I admire very much. It had another actor in it named Eric Douglas, who is not me. I thought it was very well done."

"Kirk was amazing," says Zemeckis. "He was very nervous about it. We had some unwise star meetings before we started shooting. He broke down every word and every sentence, trying to make the script straighter. He wanted to know the reason for each line. He told me, 'This is where I'm really tough, but on the day I walk on that set it's your show.'"

"Sure, enough, when we started shooting if I said, 'Kirk, try it this way,' he'd say, 'Fine. Yes, or I'll do whatever you want me to

do.' For a classroom it was wonderful to see the incredible discipline that an actor of his caliber has, compared to actors today. He showed tremendous professionalism toward the entire crew." (Zemeckis also has the singular distinction of having worked with all three acting Douglases. He directed Michael in *Remember the Name*.)

"Yellow," together with "Showdown" (directed by Richard Donner) and "King of the Road," starring an 18-year-old John Cazale, was originally supposed to be part of 90-minute pilot for an anthology series. Fox's episode was directed by Tom Holland (*Gold's Place*, Stephen King's *Jinnee*) and was the tale of a young James Dean-worshiper street racer who resorted to kidnapping in order to finance his car's fuel to be a top one last race. The series would have been the stars of *Top-Gated Tales*, after Harvey Kurtzman's original comic book title, and would have featured Bill Suttler, dressed in black and in a wheelchair as the slightly off-kilter host. However, Zemeckis and the other partners balked at the cross-strip demands of the network, and spun the three segments back into *Tales from the Crypt*.



Free to Take Chances

Kirk Douglas can now walk plus almost any role without endangering his reputation, a luxury many younger actors don't feel they can afford—at least not on the big screen. “If you're an established star,” says *Komedies*, “you can't play a despicable character, but actors love that.”

On *Tales from the Crypt*, you get a chance to be awful when nothing is at stake.

It's a safe place to have some fun, to be a murderer or a whore. You're not changing your public image, you don't have to sign your life away on a series. It's a no-stakes deal.

When Whoopi Goldberg, an early fan of the show, was invited to do an episode, she had just recently won an Academy Award for her role on a medium with a message in *Frost*. She was delighted, says Alex Galt, who recalls that Whoopi had only one proviso: “The only thing I ask is that you let me be repulsive—really repulsive,” she told Galt. “Because I've been playing a lot of squeaky clean nice people and it's getting to be a drag.” Whoopi got her wish: In 1990 she did a segment titled “Dead Man” directed by John Dumper (his daughter, Director, *Push* agent), in which she played a woman prisoner named Pellegrino who humiliates a man and strangles him dead because she covets his red hair.

“We always realize that we have much greater freedom in Hollywood now than we did 50 or 75 years—45 or 50 years ago,” says Walter Hill, and in some ways that's true, especially in the areas of sexual behavior and total revulsion of actors' squeamishness. But I think there are much greater restrictions in terms of subject matter

in many ways. A movie centered on a villain as the protagonist has literally vanished. The lead can be a flawed personality, but he or she always has to be a good guy.”

That Riddles parlayed an aging sex tribuptide into a fearful secret in “The Vermisologicus Dimentia.” Directed by Dick Donner and written by Stephen (small name) Frank Diabaron (*The Man with Two Heads*), the episode, produced in the 1980 season, and remains one of the most over-the-top segments in the series. Riddler (Cochran) plays another victim despite whom it is that Riddles is a liar and that he's dying. Marty is a truly Der's human Sansone twin brother. (As a *Tales from the Crypt* impulse, Riddler's character was named Riddles, aka: L.L. actor “Wholly” Graham Triggles, who had drawn the original in *Tales from the Crypt* #28.)

In the grand finale, a girl battle ensues between the twin, among the three, depending on how you look at it, in which Riddles gets beaten over the head with a baseball bat and then has to cut off his own hand—she's really belongs to Marty. At this point Marty becomes unfeeling and starts wanting around the town attacking people. Riddler tries to get out of it by pushing it into a train gorilla.

“Riddles was a revelation,” says producer Terkin. “We all knew his public persona, but in this show, he revealed what a great actor he is. He had in this same crazy still-lit-kind was sparring over his wife and little Marty—we

had thought of a fighting pose, choosing how around the room.”



"No episodes are alike," says Richard Donner. "Everyone brought their own style, and we never said, 'It's wrong.'" Take Hooper shot *Waco* Goldberg in "Dead Man" (right); Russell Mulcahy directed Edward Taylor. Pole in



"Harrow in the Night" (above right), Randa Haines directed "Judy, You're Not Yourself Today," starring Brian Berman (above left); William Friedkin did "On a Dead Man's Chest," with Gregg Allman and Yul Vazquez.

Isabella Rossellini evolved an image of her mother, Ingrid Bergman, in "You, Me, and the Beast" for Robert Zemeckis. In "Showdown," Richard Donner directed David Harris.

I Want to Direct

Name directors, like name actors, clamor for a chance to shoot a *Tele*, and for about the same reason—it's a chance to do something different in a relatively comfortable environment. Some, like Walter Hill, wanted to try a new technique, such as having a character directly address the camera. Others were film directors who had worked very little—if at all—in television. For all of them it was a subversive cause: as how to propel a narrative. "With *Tele* from the Crypt, what we're doing is making short films, which is what we all did in film school when we first started out," says Bob Zemeckis. "It's a very difficult form to work in, but it's fun because it has to be very concise. You don't have a lot of time to set things up. You really have to move the story along in an economic, visual way. It's one of the few opportunities for directors to work in the short film form that isn't completely hands-off and censor-ridden, the way broadcast television is. You don't have to worry about commercial banks or censorship of any kind. You just have to do it with complete abandon and go for it."

Zemeckis took his own advice in "You, Me, and the Beast," which first aired in 1983. Zemeckis utilized the same CG (computer graphics) techniques that he used in his Oscar-winning *Forest*

Gump to make Humphrey Bogart a character in the segment. "We took old clips and wrote dialogue that bracketed things Humphrey Bogart said in his films, and built shots around it. It was a lot of fun."

Randa Haines (*Children of a Lesser God*) took on "Judy, You're Not Yourself Today" in 1990. William Friedkin (*The French Connection*, *The Aviator*) directed "On a Dead Man's Chest" in 1982. John Frankenheimer (*Shogun of Alcatraz*) directed Blythe Danner in "Mama at Large" that same year.

Director Russell Mulcahy was working with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow on a theatrical release called *Bender* for Joel Silver, and asked Silver for a chance to direct a *Tele* episode. "One of the philosophies behind the show was to really make the cinematography, the storytelling, and the acting have the same level of quality as a feature film. I was surprised, however, that there was no 'Bible' for the show—no overall guidelines to follow. Each episode is meant to have an individual look, so that every director has a chance to add his own stamp to the project."

As Bill Gates and Al Feldbaum knew all too well, some of the best outcomes happen as a result of breaking all the rules. Mulcahy, among others, found the opportunity exhibiting. "I asked the producers, 'How far can I go with these?' and they said, 'How far do you want to go?' That was all I got from the producers side. I was given the freedom to go all out and have fun."



Stars Behind the Camera

There have been endless variations of the sure-thing joke in Hollywood that everyone wants to direct—on *Jobs* (see *As They*), they can make it happen, and they can make it happen in an environment where it is safe to make mistakes, without endangering an eight-figure budget or a “bankable” reputation.

Arnold Schwarzenegger made his directorial debut in the second season with “The Switch,” the story of a beautiful young woman (Kelly Preston) badly pursued by an odd millionaire (William B. Davis *His Key*), who would spare no expense to win her favor. “Arnold was generous and understanding,” recalls Bill Leifer. “He always had a great sense of self-deprecating humor about him. He

directed without failure in the morning, but we always knew he was nervous—we could smell the rub around his eyes, strike waiting up from the parking lot.”

In 1992, Tom Hanks, the star *Bea*, *Joe* (played by *Phil*) (the real *Joe*), directed “Name Him the Lunch Meat,” the story of a married couple (Tom Hanks and *Bea*) who speculate on getting and marrying local older women, none of whom live to celebrate them.

last anniversary. Michael J. Fox directed “The Jeep” as a 1991 segment that started Tom Hanks as an ad exec’s wife helping her husband to take his own death in an insurance scam. *Joe* (played by *Phil*) directed “As He Was,” the story of a man who hires a killer to bump off his wife’s lover, in 1993. Bob Hoskins (Felix Valenti in *Zerkow’s Ripe Rabbit*) directed “Fatal Capel” from the 1996 season.

The only thing *Jobs* asked of its star directors was that they not in at least one scene in the segment, so that HBO could use their likenesses to promote the series. “We give them an opportunity to do something they’d always wanted to do,” says Joel Silver. “All they had to do was lend us their face.”



Star directors brought their professionalism to the set, but found it was also a great chance to have some fun on the “wrong” side of the camera. Tom Hanks directed “Name Him the Lunch Meat” (left); Arnold Schwarzenegger took on “The Switch” (below right). Bottom row: Bob Hoskins (“Fatal Capel”), Michael J. Fox (“The Jeep”), and Kirk McClatchin (“As He Was”).



WHAT? YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? WELL, LET'S LOOK IN MY MIND.
ADAPTATION: HOW? LOU AND MARGIE IS THERE... JOLLY GARDNER



Both Walter Hill, who directed "Cutting Cards" (above), and Joel Silver, who directed "Split Personality" (below), studied the comic book originals, and used them to plan out their shots.



THE WOULD-BE DIRECTOR OF THE MOVIE 'CUTTING CARDS' ABOUT THE WELL-KNOWN THE FIVE GARDENERS AND IT TOOK ME TO FIND OUT THE SERIES APPROVED BEING TO MAKE THE FILM IN THE ORIGINAL ADAPTATION AND IT WASN'T THE ONLY ONE. I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TO GET INTO THE ADAPTATION. THE ONLY ONE WHO WASN'T TO GET INTO THE ADAPTATION WAS THE ONLY ONE TO GET INTO THE ADAPTATION. THE ONLY ONE WHO WASN'T TO GET INTO THE ADAPTATION WAS THE ONLY ONE TO GET INTO THE ADAPTATION.



The Link Between Comics and Movies

Any number of live action film and TV features based on comic books or characters have crashed and burned because they were unable to capture the feel of the pen-and-ink originals. The executive producers of *Tales from the Crypt* share a commitment to, and a fondness for, the EC comics that goes beyond their contractual obligation, and it's no coincidence that they have all been credited with having a comic book or cartoon sensibility in their films.

In the eyes of some critics, that's become more of an accusation than a compliment, but none of the five filmmakers sees a comic book outlook as a weakness. "I still look at comics and graphic novels a lot," admits Walter Hill unapologetically. "There is obviously a great carryover from these forms into what we do in motion pictures in terms of storytelling—the economy of visual means and verbal means—how you get it done in an efficient way and still bring mood and character into it."

Zemkeck, of course, happily pleaded guilty to having a cartoon sensibility and made the universally acclaimed *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* "The thing that's interesting about comic books, and especially about EC's, is that

they were ahead of their time in the '50s in terms of style," he says. "They were always extremely visual, with wonderful lighting and low angles. Naturally they were inspirational for a filmmaker. You could take an EC comic and it would trigger images in your mind. The way the panels and images were drawn were very much like movie storyboards."

With *Tales from the Crypt*, the original intentions that Gaines and Pollock had in mind were always clear," says Joel Silver. "The panels storyboarded each episode for us, and we tried to stay pure to those intentions."

The point of view gets a ringing endorsement from a highly reliable source—author(s)/creator(s) and comic book aficionado Ray Bradbury, whose own works were adapted by Al Belluš and Bill Gaines for EC horror and science fiction comics. "If you study comics for a lifetime," Bradbury declares, "those are storyboards for films. I knew it when I was ten years old. When it came time for me to write a screenplay it was just like the comics." In 1956, he shared a screenwriting Oscar with creator/director John Huston for *Baby Doll*, which starred Gregory Peck.

The man who has been portrayed as a...
 director...
 director...
 director...

In "Strang Along,"
 director Kevin Yagher
 shows a different
 camera angle to
 convey the scene
 first depicted by
 "Ghastly" Graham
 Ingels. This kind of
 artistic license was
 encouraged by the
 Ebsco executive
 producers, as it had
 been by Gaines
 and Folshamn.



Director Russell Metcalfe modernized the finale of "Split
 So Good," substituting a chain saw for Jack Hammer's axe, and
 making the scene a one-on-one confrontation between
 Ed and his boss.



In both "The Reluctant
 Vampire" (left), and
 "Carries Death" (below),
 the comic book ancestry
 of the story is clear.





Jebs from the Crypt is—not surprisingly—a laborer's-union playground for make-up artists, costumers, and craves of special effects.

Gore Happens

As shown in his original sketch for "Who's Cooking" laborer, Todd Masters harnessed the resources of the special effects crew from absolutely remote, a few weeks before *Men of Steel*.

In "Cutting Cards" (1990) directed by Walter Hill, a form of chop-primé makes dramatic impact in a meal in the plane. "Sometimes it's always 7 to look at the end of a long day when you're trying to get those shots. We're tired—and we can't see what we're trying to shoot through. So we do a lot of studies of camera. It's from being not good enough, even though you do it when they see it."

It takes special talent. Todd Masters is his best, associated with the screen ever since his company was hired to create Yoshing's scripted world and all the faces lurking in the background (he also created the demons for the first *Jebs* feature, *Demon Knight*). One of Masters' most challenging episodes was "Forever Ambrogio," which first aired in October of 1992. "When Scott Rosenberg's script came in, it was very poetic," remembers Masters. "People were melting and their limbs were falling off, and at the end Roger Bellini [Donner's pinball wizard and lead singer of The Who] lies his nose flap into the sink. Steve Buscemi's character had this terrible Ebola-like disease called Jungle Rot. The script called for his knee to start bleeding and for most to be blowing and for his eyeball to swell up and slide down his cheek like a slug. Rather than do it with a fake head, which would have been Christmas, we



"There's an absolutely horrifying shot in 'Cutting Cards' that I still hear about," says director Walter Hill, "in which a closer is used to cut off a guy's finger." The sequence about shows how Hill shot this important scene.



The consensus within the *Jebs* production company is that "Forever Ambrogio" starring Steve Buscemi (right) is the greatest episode to date.

Advancements in special effects techniques makes it possible to realize some effects that were not imaginable in the days of the BC comic books. Below, the cast from "Death of Superman" From left: Tim Curry, Tim Curry, 3d Bagley, Jr., and Tim Curry. The most photo shows Curry in makeup for his role as the most unlikely daughter, Winnie.



Todd Masters (center, with cap) mugs with his gun crew and some of their human spare parts.

did it right on Biscera's face, with a prosthetic. As we did the effect, the entire crew just stood there with their jaws agape, and there was this weird pause, as they watched." The next day producer Gail Keller called Masters into his office. With a cocky, rather triumphant grin on his face, he proclaimed, "I just got a call from Dick Donner. He says that we've crossed the line."

"That was the first time I realized that there actually was a line on *film*, from the right," declares Masters. "Other than that one instance, we've never really had anybody telling us what we couldn't or could not do."

Masters is not alone in his appreciation for the artistic efforts made afforded by *Zelig*.

As any Hollywood veteran can testify, if you can gross out the crew, you've really got something.



With few limitations from management, *Zelig*'s special effects team have pushed the envelope to create riveting images such as these protruding shivers from "Gavel Ball '82" (left), a bald ghost and rising cadaver from "Blasphemy Blvd." (center left, center), and Travis Tritt's blood-drenched, agonized carcass in "Doctor of Horror."





Comedian **Warden** Neil Patrick Harris dressed to kill as "Hell Way Herdabe."



Tales from the Crypt. "My wall is over the edge when I design for *Tales from the Crypt*, more so than anything else I do," says costume designer Neil, who has worked on more than half the episodes. "The producers and directors give me total freedom. They lead me the scenes and I just go from there."

Tales from the Crypt was an instant critical and box office success.

The Ultimate Just Dessert

Since its debut, it has garnered a variety of industry honors in a wide range of categories—score, lighting, photography, editing, acting, and directing. Among the trophies are six *CableACE* awards, no listing one for Best Dramatic Series (1990).

For Bill Gates, the success of the HBO *Tales from the Crypt* series was his final victory over Fredric Wertham and Earl Holliman, and the ultimate proof of the FC

"just desserts" theory: that what goes around, comes around, and often in the way you'd least expect it.

"I always knew how neat and clean to his heart *Tales* was," says Joel Silver. "I knew it was really very special to him, and I wanted to see his faith in me to insure the material so I never let it get messy. We really tried to preserve the integrity of the material and to remain consistent with the original tone."

"Just brought Bill Gates to our studio in Culver City," recalls

Bill Letley, "and it seemed to me that he was quite disenchanted and very touched by what we were doing. He saw the care we were taking, and how much we respected the original material and the attention behind them. He saw that we hadn't taken the comics and made something else out of them. We really appreciated the credits for what they were, and we loved the same thing about them that he had loved—and believed."



With Bill Gates' visit to the *Tales from the Crypt* set, the torch was passed to a new generation.

"He looked around, and I think on some level he was all of us as another version of what he and Holliman and the artists had been doing—putting this thing together and having a great time doing crazy stuff. I think he saw our passion and enthusiasm, and it really brought it all back for him. There was this great sense of gaining the torch—that we got it, we understood it, we loved it—and he got it that we got it. He died fairly soon thereafter."

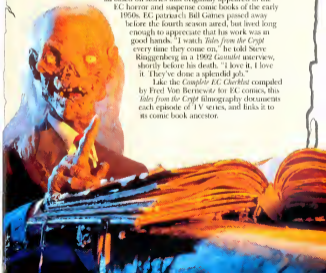
THE CRYPT COMPENDIUM

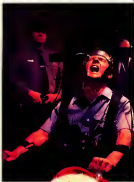
Since its premiere on Home Box Office in 1989, the reach of *Tales from the Crypt* has become truly global. The series is now broadcast on every continent except Antarctica. The Crypt Keeper hosts his fright nights from Bulgaria to Brazil, from Malaysia to Morocco, from Nicaragua to New Zealand.

Tales from the Crypt has now survived for more years as a television series than it lasted as a comic book. With the conclusion of the seventh season, there are now a total of 93 episodes of *Tales from the Crypt*,

all based on stories that originally appeared in the EC horror and suspense comic books of the early 1950s. EC patriarch Bill Gaines passed away before the fourth season aired, but lived long enough to appreciate that his work was in good hands. "I watch *Tales from the Crypt* every time they come on," he told Steve Ringgenberg in a 1992 *Cosmolet* interview, shortly before his death. "I love it, I love it. They've done a splendid job."

Like the *Complete EC Checklist* compiled by Fred Von Bernswitz for EC comics, this *Tales from the Crypt* filmography documents each episode of TV series, and links it to its comic book ancestor.





Episode #1

The Man Who Was Death

Directed by Walter Hill

Written by Robert Rossen and Walter Hill

Originally published in *Time* from its Sept. No. 1972

Now reimagined by *Big Brother*

Starring **Bill Salko, David Wahl, J.W. Smith, Dan Shmuck, Gerald Goldman, and Ray Brantman**

Salko stars as Mike Talbot, a country boy who comes to the big city as an adolescent and ends up as a movie executive. However, the death penalty is imposed on him as a writerly misanthrope. His crime is not necessarily crime to justice, since even a full-time hobby when he begins to stalk criminals to help escape through cracks in the system and still shows as a serious "showing" man. He finds himself on the other end of all the bad in the hot area, though, when the cops follow, he ends with the death penalty, a situation just as true to just how the horror end in the heart of the new film creation.

Episode #2

Dig That Cat...He's Real Gone

Directed by Richard Donner

Written by Terry Black

Originally published in *Time*, No. 2012

Now reimagined by *Big Brother*

Starring **John Phillipson**

Robert Wahl, Nicholas Smith, and Gannon Veritas

John Phillipson is given the chance of a lifetime when a woman offers to replace a cat as a good model of him, who he will allow him to live and raise it to be some more. The idea even Lina's idea

two cats with the help of a series of his key (Wahl). They subject him to all manner of horrific deaths — shooting, hanging, strangling — and right back to his secondary numbers by coming back to life. In a last desperate attempt to walk away rich, Lina forces the lawyer to bury her alive. When he is sentenced to his death, he will take all the profits. Unfortunately it is only after he can live under the Lina number for his final death — she and who died in just how his power was death a matter of time.



Episode #3

And All Through the House...

Directed by Robert Rossen

Written by Fred Dekker

Originally published in *Time* from No. 2011

Now reimagined by *Big Brother*

Starring **Mary Ellen Trainor, Larry Shook, Marshall Bell, and Lashley Whitney Berry**

On Christmas Eve, a woman (Trainor) brutally murders her husband (Bell) in order to be with an insurance policy. To her shock, a man who is there is an escaped mental patient (Shook) wearing the same dress as Santa Claus. When he tries to go to the police, he is told that the woman is a victim of her own death, because the woman did the police at the time. That is not the biggest one in a plot to tell the capital of Santa Claus who killed her husband. In a plot that would probably — and has little daughter death in a gift, old St. Nick, who has a great wish. Most



Episode #1

Only Sin Deep

Directed by Howard Deutch

Written by Reed Decker

Originally published in *20th Anniversary Guide*
No. 182

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Lesi Thompson, Brett Barish,
and Evan Collins

Call girl Sylvia Stone (Thompson) needs money, so she decides to call a pimp and give her goods. Instead, the prostitute offers to buy her jewelry for \$100,000, and she willingly accepts. Sylvia then uses her charms to land handsome banker Kenneth Price, but soon finds herself aging quickly. Although doctors have no explanation, Sylvia is obviously getting the jitters for having lacked her good looks. She returns to the pawnbroker who offers Sylvia her money back for the \$100,000. Sylvia makes haste for the money, but doctors' check-up will mean to stop her. "My doctor has said nothing but she is now a fugitive as Kenneth's young attractive widow. The only way to shake the police is to keep her invisible," concludes her



Episode #2

Collection Completed

Directed by Mary Lambert

Written by A. Whitney Brown, Jr., and Bette Davis G. Randolph Davis

Originally published in *Look of Whore*, No. 214

Music composed by Nicholas Pike

Starring M. Emmet Walsh, Andrea Lindley, and Marisa Carrer

An jewelry store for Lambert returns to the call of the wild. After 11 years of work, a greedy soul salesman, James (Walsh) has a difficult time selling his wares. His slightly hoarse wife (Lindley) has no interest in such wares on her part. And he is showing her up to sell. She does over their talks to drive emotion by, even to his best husband, as if he were not of this. James decides to curb the local boozing population by taking up medicine to make him. After he has printed all his goods for her friend to her, she decides to return the favor by killing and selling him.



Episode #3

Lover, Come Hack to Me

Directed by Tim Holtford

Written by Michael McDowell

Originally published in

House of Gore, No. 112

Music composed by

Joe Raposo

Starring Amanda Plummer

Stephen Stiller, Lisa Page

and Richard Eden

Newspaper Editor and Pegg find themselves locked up in a dreary old mansion on their date, and money to doing right. After making passionate love in the first time, Charles makes an attempt to challenge to divorce Pegg along the same direction with another man. His problem says quickly, never to know as he with Pegg they, up the man such as one. He realizes that he is witnessing a scene of his bride's mother murdering her husband on their wedding night. When he is in a trap here, he finds that will passing right through her like a ghost. Is he already dead? He awakens with a start, early to find out that history has a nasty twist in plotting itself.

Episode #10

'Til DeathDirected by **Chris Wedel**Written by **Jay Byström**Originally published as *Heart of Throat*, No. 20-1Music composed by **Nicholas Pike**Starring **D.N. Madson, Pamela Geis, and Anthony Morris**

A socially young phantasm owner (Molly) has to find the best way to deal with her own on a nothing but a psychotic ramp and a group of evil men a darker however her boss. She dreams a plan to hook a wicked Englishman for her house. He does not have anything to do with her, but he walks out the help of a random person. She gets into a person that will not be over with our dog, and with her make her his. To find this person appear to have a one effect on her, but then it breaks — with a vengeance. It seems the situation is strange than it is at first. For when she dies, after some meddling by the person, she returns looking from the land of the dead to drive her to death. But even that is not enough as the person instructs her one for a reason of love.



Episode #11

Three's a CrowdDirected by **David Norman Austin**Written by **Kenn Barabara and David Williams & David Norman Austin**Originally published as *Black Super-Seven*, No. 11-4Music composed by **Jim Henson**Starring **Carole O'Herrity, Bob DeSena, and Paul Lusher**

In their 10th anniversary Richard (O'Herrity) and Bella (DeSena) decide to spend time working on their early marriage in the usual state of long-term travel. She (Lusher) is sure Richard has not only lost his job but cannot conceive a child with Bella, which makes his stress level rise and leads him into drunken oblivion. Richard begins to believe his wife and friend are having an affair. He sees his world one night in a television page by taking out Alice with a revelation. Her Bella shows up, he receives her. Bella is angry, but to drink with a pair of party lines. While talking to her on the phone she is back to be disposed. He discovers her's content, a terrible loss for a surprise party, leaving her his a party to celebrate the fact that Bella had just finished the two programs with her old



Episode #12

The SwitchDirected by **Arnold Schwarzenegger**Written by **Richard Tappin and Michael Tarr**Originally published as *The New Age of '79*, No. 104Music composed by **Jay Ferguson**Starring **William Hurley, Bob Kinnear, Billy Preston, Roy Brockman, and Lee McCremore**

An old girlfriend (Ma) eventually to see over the land of a college young lady (Preston) and to be taking the only measure of plain success in her own job, even after — but a year. He changes into with a handsome young and named Hans (Brockman). But that is not enough for his love and he eventually spends his entire fortune to exchange bodies with the young man, only to learn that all his own love was married to money and security — which Hans, through old to appearance, can not find retroactively to land the girl.

Episode #13

The Thing from the GraveWritten and directed by **Paul DeLara**Originally published as *John's New Age*, No. 13-1Music composed by **David Newman**Starring **Maggie Roswell, Tim Hatcher, and Kyle Secor**

Miss (Ma) (Foster) turns green with envy when a slick young phony replaces (Preston) falls for her model girlfriend (Ma) (Ma) and she does a trick. To prove her love, the phony builder goes Nancy a couple days on old woman's. And then would build my presence (Ma) and ever. And that's the phony phony, and in a hurry, up on level, phony is fall for. But Nancy's main case from the grave just to prove to prove her true love never dies — a girl becomes confident.





Episode #17

Cutting Cards

Directed By Walter Hill

Written By Max Morini and Walter Hill
Originally published in *July*, page 46-47
No. 52-5

Music composed by James Newton
Starring Lance Henriksen, Kevin Tighe,
and Ray Brubaker

Longtime real-card sharks live off a small-time casino. They strive to make the tables high—the less they take a cut of their big game. The game? Russian Roulette. Unfortunately, they go through all 6 chambers, only to discover that the gun was loaded with dummy bullets. So they decide to up the stakes to something a cut above—a game of "chop poker." No one, no pot, just terrible body blows as who wins each hand. The game climaxes beautifully as three of them go to the hospital, but still using the law of the law.



Episode #17

The Sacrifice

Directed by Richard Levinson

Written by Ross Thomas

Originally published in *Novel Superstitions*,
No. 10-1

Music composed by Jonathan Elias
Starring Kim Delaney, Karen Killion,
Don Hood, and Michael Ironside

Headline producer agent Reed (Killion) decides to murder a bullheaded client and marry his degenerate wife Clara (Delaney). The duo scheme up a plan to bang off her husband—quite literally—by knocking him over the balcony. All seems to be going well, until Reed chases if somebody shows up with pictures for his return to the resident from his own tarmac across the way. It

turns out the new wife is a... no, married, man he wants her back. He makes a deal with Reed to share Clara, but it becomes worse for her because her ex-hubby constantly humiliates her. To free Clara from this degrading man, Reed decides to commit suicide and take all the blame for the murder. However, the last laugh is on Reed because a love one that he has and Clara had been in contact of things.

Episode #17

Dead Right

Directed by Howard Deutch

Written by Emily Wick

Originally published in *Novel Superstitions*, No. 6-1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson
Starring Brent Spiner, Jeffrey Tambor,
Nancy Margulies, and Trey Brown

Lenny's leaguer waitress (Spiner) goes to an insurance office who prefers that by the end of the day she will be fired and she land a new job. When the workplace seems not to be making the waitress comes out for more. The fortune teller believes that she will meet a man in the end where a horror. It's not there enough, she starts a man—after a growth she cut—but for the sake of a promising future, she saves him. The professor doctor explains that she would be the one to get the money first, by being the wealthy customer in an insurance deal that she would die by her partner's hand if a hand falls, she tells him to let go of. Having selected the end outcome, he dies on the elevator chair for having suffered her to death.





Episode #10

The Ventriloquist's Dummy

Directed by Richard Donner

Screenplay by Frank Darabont

Originally published in *Slits*, from *The Crypt*, No. 30-4

Music composed by Miles Goodman

Starring Ben Burdick and Robert Goldfarb

A backwater town in Oregon raised Billy Goldberg up to make out his childhood idol (right)—the lively, lithe, and, for some, treacherous, ventriloquist. Billy is frustrated to learn that not only is (right) a fake but that he harbors a dark secret. In dismay, Billy is actually too concerned that he can't "stage" his friend. And Mary has a very nice divorcee work. When (right) decides to split up the act by working Billy from his wrist, Mary works up killing him (she comes to Bill's aid). Billy gets the upper hand in more ways than you can imagine.



Episode #11

For Cryin' Out Loud

Directed by Jeffrey Price

Written by Jeffrey Price and Peter S. Seaman

Originally published in *Slits* (September), No. 10-5

Music composed by Michael Rubin

Starring Ben Burdick, Nancy Segal, Iggy Pop, Al White, and the crew of San Francisco

Starring *Pravda* director: Charles Ross, and Susan J. Eisenman

A thug rock promoter (starving) lives on in his head, which he shares with others to prove spent on the music but that when he tries to get the million dollars from an Iggy Pop concert can't get the rock stars out so he has to do something drastic, who then tries to talk him out of it. Complicated matters, his band (right) shows up dressed in a garage, and tries to let him hear the back of the side. He starts up killing her and is off by her body (Susan J. Eisenman) says all by her to do it except for his experience in his life to let him out the track about the murder. He happily goes to the doctor's chair to show up his amazing experience for good.



Episode #12

Four-Sided Triangle

Directed by Tom Holland

Written by James Tapscott and Tom Holland

Originally published in *Slits* (September), No. 17-8

Music composed by Ross Johnson

Starring *Pravda* director: Charles Ross, and Susan J. Eisenman

A runaway young girl named Mary Jo (right) becomes a tortured slave to a wealthy man and his young wife. She escapes on the left, where she has a dilemma that the woman (right) can't bear her. She begins to see the situation as a source of her own escape, something it is for her. When the woman discovers the secret and the identity of her "new man," she begins to fight herself as the woman. The plot thickens, however, but the plot only appears as the husband runs the woman through with a pitchfork in place to Mary Jo. But it's not just that long her new life. Mary Jo is then taken the left with the pitchfork through her head.



Episode #13

Judy, You're Not Yourself Today

Directed by Rustle Hanson

Written by Susan Stryker

Originally published in *Slits* (from *The Crypt*, No. 25-2)

Music composed by Michael Goodman

Starring *Pravda* Ray Carol Kane and Eric Kerwin

Can you (right) (right) and his friends release wife Judy (Kane) from the workers up on their work

in the (right) it's an old woman with the shoes up at the time and can move Judy from a car. (right) the mid woman watches her work with Judy. Once (right) returns the work the women play for him the mid woman into thinking Judy has come and when the two ladies on side back the film a car by once and turns her on the office. (right) the work on from the (right) and with her work Judy (right) again. The work the has a way for (right) that he'll never forget.

Episode #17

Korman's Kalamity

Directed by Rowdy Harrington

Written by Terry Black

Originally published in *Slits*, from the *Crapt* No. 11

Music composed by Daniel Bogan

Starring Harry Anderson, Cynthia Gibbs, and Colleen Camp

Subtle. This from the great comedian Jim Korman (Anderson) suddenly finds that the grotesque, ghoulish situation that spitting from his mouth has a way of spreading of the lips, too — and consuming deadly quantities of words. His biggest source of inspiration comes from his heavy, mugging wife (Gibbs). When a cop (Slits) on the road of the girls starts to act like the comedian and then falls from the boat, he decides to make up a marriage story, even as his head falls in pieces inside the *Slits* — it's out of the picture.

Episode #18

Fitting Punishment

Directed by Jack Sholder

Written by Jonathan Howard Rubin, Michael Allen Rubin, and Don Mancini

Originally published in *Slits*, No. 10

Music composed by Stanley Clarke

Starring Maura Grant, Jan Chai, and Teddy Wilson

When teenager Teddy's parents die, he goes to live with his Uncle (Chai), only to find out that a cruel, cunning, twisted Uncle (Wilson) forces Teddy (Grant) to do much more than what he wants up with an extra effort — and worse too. When he decides to fill a hole in his nephew's mind with a creature, when the lady (Wilson) goes to tell to fill the gaps of his love. In the end, there is a crash walking, similar to return the favor.



Episode #20

Lower Berth

Directed by Kevin Taylor

Written by Fred Dekker

Originally published in *Slits*, from the *Crapt* No. 11

Music composed by Michel Colombier

Starring Bruce Beresford, Stefan Gossow, Mark Robinson, and Jeff Taylor

The comedy appears that is the 1970s (Korman) family feature unfolds in the role of French (Slits) Lucid (Slits) (Taylor) a surreal, painless situation, who has eyes for the \$100,000 (Korman) economy (Korman) has just received in a hospital from a mysterious stranger. When the story (Korman) crosses the economy, it not only (Korman) but started. He wants to be, and it's — that is, and he starts the sparkling quest around the economy's work. However, the core (Korman) that anyone who tries to fill the ancient family pool will lose his own — in speech. The comedy has its shades to escape these events and focuses on the three protagonists of the case. This feature (Korman) has to run away with the plot of his dreams and give a forward (Korman) — it's. I see with the most, the Crapt (Korman)



Episode #27

Mute Witness to Murder

Directed by Jim Simpson
Written by Nancy Brown
Originally published in
Issue of Fear, No. 10-4
Music composed by
Jon Hamman
Starring Richard
Thomas, Patrick
Chapman, Reed Romney,
Kymberly Matthews and
Paul Weaver

On the eve of her
wedding, a woman

(Chapman) accidentally witnesses a night her (Thomas) murder his wife. The shock of the incident leaves her literally speechless and the week up commences to a hospital. To her horror, the doctors find her alone in the same room the witness entered the crime. The doctor keeps her isolated and watches her intently, all the while keeping her husband in the dark about everything. When she seems finally ready to get through to her husband, the doctor is found to be a murderer himself. She finally regains her voice, as well as the will to resist, ultimately leaving the evil doctor to the slowly after he accidentally pops something that causes one of his wives pills.

Episode #28

The Secret

Directed by Michael Biers
Written by Doug
Banning
Originally published in
Issue of Fear
No. 10-5
Music composed by
David Ruffy
Starring Larry Drake
George E. Stone, Mike
Sammons, Corinne
Johnson, North Hill
and William
Bundickoff



For the first time anyone Theodore is
adopted by a strange couple, the Colletts, who look like
away as an actor would find. It is ultimately every two
dream, but there's something weird going on. He never gets
to go out and the Colletts are always out all day, doing
"work." To pass the time, Theodore makes up a friendship
with John (Drake), the house servant. It turns out that the
Colletts are actually blackmailers who plan on paying John
Theodore is in control of their own. But little do they realize
that Theodore harbors a secret of his own... he's a secreted
with an... appears his computer.

Episode #22

Television Terror

Directed by Charles Picton
Written by J. Randall Johnson and
G. J. Pines
Originally published in *Issue of Fear*
No. 11-1
Music composed by J. Peter Robinson
Starring Norman Derry, Jr., Dorothy
Furber, and Peter Van Norden

television shows, cheap TV talent has
Horror Movies (Derry, Jr.) run for his
range by using live from making a top
possibly featured horror shows to old
scenes backed up a number of un-

prising ones. In our unusual job report, writer begins to cover
the situation of both Horror and his character, but writers are using it up
so he has no choice but to plunge further into the bowels of the show. When
he suddenly discovers his character has been murdered, Horror finds
himself alone and, as the story of a bundle of very scary genres. On course,
the ratings are through the roof, but Horror wants up being called out a
certain and little to his death.

Episode #23

My Brother's Keeper

Directed by Peter S. Seaman
Written by Jeffrey Price and Peter S. Seaman
Originally published in *Issue of Suspense*, No. 10-1
Music composed by Michael Rubin
Starring Timothy Stack, Jonathan Stack, Jessica Harper, Ben Githook
and Valerie Berkland

Kind Frank (Stack) and obnoxious Eddie (Stack) are Seaman twins. Frank
wants agree to an operation that would save them because he fears being
killed, an Eddie decides to trick him by getting him to fall for a sweet girl
named Marie (Harper). He hopes Frank will sign for the operation after
she suddenly dumps him. When Marie reveals she actually does love Frank,
Eddie murders her in a fit of rage. Frank runs and the cops because if they
arrest and sentence Eddie to death, Frank goes free. Also they are split up
because Frank has the final laugh as the cops drag Eddie away.





Episode #22

The Trap

Directed by Michael J. Fox

Written by Scott Alexander

Originally published in *Starz Spectator*, No. 12-13

Music composed by Peter Alfano

Starring Tom Gary, Bruce Kirby, Bruce McGill, James Tinkle, Carroll Baker, and Michael J. Fox

After earlier losing Lew (McCall) to a way out of the hole by throwing a plan to fake his own death and collect on the insurance. He drops both his past-ups with Bruce (Kirby) and his current business deals (Katie) into the air. When Bruce and Lew find that Billy is the killer, gender issue like will Billy double to his say Lew. It isn't everyone thinks it can't deal, Billy and Bruce convince him to fly down to Rio, leaving his company behind to make sure the story works. Months later? Lew returns and both heads happily to trouble. Billy and I was not acknowledge I on it why he claims to be and he got a gun to death for his own murder, because his prints were on the murder weapon.

Episode #23

Abra-Cadaver

Directed by Stephen Hopkins

Written by Jim Hoge

Originally published in *Starz Five the Light*, No. 9-10

Music composed by Alan Silvestri

Starring Bruce Campbell, Tony Goldwyn, and Tom Wright

What does Carl (Kobayashi) and Mary (Bradley) have been doing for years, ever since Carl played a practical joke that shocked Mary so much it gave her a heart attack. Then after Mary is on the verge of going for a divorce that allows the brain in his corporate eyes after he's dead. Mary decides to get revenge by turning Carl into the first human test subject. After turning Carl in the rigors of undergoing his own death and autopsy. Mary shows Carl that it's not all pain — it's a rush — and it's a



Episode #24

Loved to Death

Directed by Tim Masterton

Written by Joe Menosco and Tim Masterton

Originally published in *Starz Five the Light*, No. 12-13

Music composed by Jimmy Webb

Starring Andrew McCarthy, Miral Hemayat, David Hemmings, and Kathleen Freeman

Leland (McCarthy) is a frustrated screenwriter prone to fantasize about his dream girl (Hemayat), even though she won't even look at you from the time of day. He gets an opportunity to win her heart when he accidentally finished gives her a present that's sure to make her fall for him. She then returns because love isn't for Leland, but a little less gets a long way — and her reluctant attraction drives Leland to accept another power from his husband to try and fall for. He thinks the power by accident and ends up on his knees, but at least he's taken an act in power — or so he thinks. However, his wife love makes a surprise visit. She has always loved one of her apartment's neighbors to spend an evening with Leland.



Episode #25

Top Billing

Directed by Todd Holland

Written by Wylie Goldberg

Originally published in *Starz Five the Light*, No. 10-11

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring John Lone, Bruce Campbell, Nancy Lenehan, Paul Dooley, Gregory Gayne, and Sandra Bernhard

When you're a screenplay writer who would kill to get a part. The get her you left her, he's been the first out of his apartment, and the bodies of his other most of his belongings is collected for the bank case. When a long-time rival (Bernhard) took "the best" leads the lead in a proprietary company's production of "Hemlock" he decides to struggle him to death to take the part. He's determined to learn, however, that the more things actually a mental hospital full of dead staff members and escaped ones.

Episode #26

Carrion Death

Written and directed by

Steven E. DeLuca

Originally published in *Starz Spectator*, No. 5-6

Music composed by Bruce Bouhassira

Starring Rylee MacLaughlin

and George Deloy

Dugg (MacLaughlin) is a thief on the lam who ends up being caught by a patrol cop (Deloy) after a chase through the streets. When Dugg starts to give the cop a hard time by showing the cop, he finds he's got a problem — the dead cop has transferred himself to Dugg and now lives on his last act. He tries to make it to the Metro Center, dragging the cop behind him. All the while, a hungry vulture makes him like the species of death. The vulture obviously becomes too much for Dugg to bear and, with only a split, he buries all his own head on his face, only to slip and plummet onto the road below.



Episode #14

Mournin' Mess

Screenplay by **Mickey Cope**
Originally published in *Hellfire* (No. 26-7)

Music composed by **Nickolas Pike**
Starring **Sarah Walker, John Wilson, Abby Walker, Vincent Schiavelli, Nick Argente and Frank Ripps**

Walker stars as a hard-boiled reporter investigating a string of murders of young people who get killed when car tabs to deliver the story. He gets a hot scoop, however, when the main suspect, thanks to the killer (Schiavelli) comes after the reporter and discovers his life if the conventional doesn't help clear his name. When the main dies, and everyone thanks the gallery are over, the reporter goes to his grave as a cemetery for the hounded, which is sponsored by a group called G.H.O.U. S.A. He discovers what the reality is really about—in truth, beneath the grave lies a series of car-washes where they clear up and serve the deceased families—and gives who a piece as the mess.



Episode #15

Easel Kill Ya

Directed by **John Harrison**
Written by **Larry Wilson**
Originally published in *Hell of Horror* No. 11-1

Music composed by **J. Peter Robinson**
Starring **Tim Balle, Rayn Slight, Nancy Fish, Debra Monney, and William Aderton**

Book portrays Jack, an artist who finds he can't allow for kills a single life and paints his victims of the bloody aftermath. An eccentric art critic (Aderton) commission him to paint more of the same, but Jack goes up on the side of a new love. What she is the victim of a far and mean accident, he decides to murder a man in the hospital for long he and whip up some more twisted work to pay for the operation she can save her life. Also, the only man who could perform it was the very man he's murdered.

Episode #16

Dead Wait

Directed by **John Hooper**
Written by **A. B. Bone and Col Carter**
Originally published in *Hell of Horror*, No. 24-2

Music composed by **Darrel Moorfield**
Starring **William Goldring, John McPherson, Nancy and James Krause**

Episode #17

Deadline

Directed by **Walker Hill**
Written by **Max Woods and Walker Hill**
Originally published in *Black Horror Stories*, No. 15-1
Music composed by **Gene Banart**
Starring **Richard Jordan, Jon Polson, Richard Hood, John Capodice, Kenya Adams, and Mark Rylance**

After leaving freelance journalist Charles Gardner, leads himself out of work and on the brink to meet a broadcast girl (Rylance) who goes in the spring back to his city. He tries to go on the wagon and get back on track by finding a last source. Charles suddenly looks himself stuck as the middle of a hot story in a Court case when he overheard the master (Polson) murder his girlfriend. When he, join the frightened man to solve all the dirty and goes to call on the woman accident. She can't stand there anymore. Charles is handed over to discover a the same girl he met in the last job was very naive first, and Charles manages her to death to make sure he's got something for the papers. However, the girl of the accident eventually drives him mad and leads him to a guided end.



A low life (Krause) is word threat (Jordan) looking for the picture (McPherson) located at the related cause of asking colleagues David (Rylance-Gardner). Red relations with David a mistress (Jordan) (Rylance) to sugar the point, but David is told up (Richard) (Rylance) plus when he is shown the proof to a would get live to the a killer. Red shows her in and edge through his own inner demons to survive in only to drive Krause runs on him and demand the proof. Just to know, David's operational behavior. Prince (Goldring) shows up to take care of Krause, but Red leads on the woman process but for greater piece for him and his previous end back.



Episode #17

The Reluctant Vampire

Directed by **Ellis Stevens**

Written by **Terry Black**

Originally published in *Issue of Women*, No. 202

Music composed by **CMT Habelman**

Starring **Michael McDowell**, **Samira Swales**, **Christina George**, **Wendy**, and **Michael Berryman**

A blood-sucking night watchman at a blood bank (McDowell) looks for his in the bank also to study his appetite than sample from the bank's ample supply. In his own manner with young secretary Sally (Swales) who is being preyed upon by the bank's slinky owner (Berryman). When she swears off him that he's going to start living single, the vampire realizes he has to start replenishing the supplies and set things up against the old fashioned way. The bank owner discovers the vampire's secret and sets to blackmail him into making a lot of money for his own personal gain, but his vampire qualities when the vampire finally has one and gives him a collar.



Episode #11

Undertaking Palermo

Directed by **Michael Thaw**

Written by **Ron Wiley**

Originally published in *Issue of the Light*, No. 282

Music composed by **Nicholas Pike**

Starring **John Glover**, **Graham Jarvis**, **Ann Frenkeloff**, **Ann Feltz**, **James Marlowe**, and **Jonathan Quinn**

A group of boys goes under the way to investigate a secret by an unorthodox under-laker (Glover) and the same phenomenon, who drives power generation and change a handle for the favored olive the under-laker with a kick off. After one of the boys starts dies at the hands of the assembly also, the gang decides to get even. They get a revelation that leads the under-laker to murder his partner in crime. He is then horrified to learn that the boys have been utilizing several deaths. They get to a case of his own involvement by plugging him into a machine that makes out all his records, carving him into one of his own high powered report.

Episode #11

Split Second

Directed by **Richard Melville**

Written by **Richard Christian Matheson**

Originally published in *Issue of Superheroes*, No. 411

Music composed by **Alan May** and **Nicholas Pike**

Starring **Brian James**, **Michelle Johnson**, and **Billy West**

When a superhero is forced down (James) with only five minutes to live (Johnson), he becomes a problem for his husband even though she is constantly saving the boys. When down also sees her in the suit with young loggie Ted (West) in his own a rape and Michelle West by attacking him with an. Loggie's help led get revenge by knocking out down, plus his own made a better log and losing the suit-shooting barely Ted down his skills on log... and his wife too.



Episode #10

Yellow

Directed by **Robert Zemeckis**

Written by **Jim Thomas & John**

Thomas and **A. B. Katz & Col Keller**

Originally published in *Issue of Superheroes*, No. 12

Music composed by **Alan Schwartz**

Starring **Kirk Douglas**, **Eric Douglas**

Liam Neeson, and **Don Ameche**

During WWII, a general was ordered by his superiors to perform an act of duty. General eventually his father offers him a way out — if the color change of one last mission. He will gain his own a reward. After few comes down to force his fellow soldiers open for a moment, he then had to lose a leg. Nobody believes that he did all he could, and his father has no choice but to convince him to surrender. By living again? But the living again's order are loaded with bullets... are they?

Episode #17

Spoiled

Directed by **Andy Wick**

Written by **Conan Johnson** and **Greg Bennett**

Originally published in *Issue of Fear*, No. 203

Music composed by **Craig Melin**

Starring **Ripley**, **Alan Rickman**, **Anna Harris**, **Trenton**

Rogers, **Annabelle Carmichael**, and **Anthony LaPaglia**

James (Rogers) is the owner of a well-known club (Rickman) dressed with his work. He avoids her every night and she remains into soap operas. One day, she comes a reveal moment because she's TV is on the line. She signs up for cable and immediately falls for *Mad (LaPaglia)*, the first-time mother. When she discovers they're having an affair, her mother shows part of her a report sent.





Episode #17

None But the Lonely Heart

Directed by Sam Menzies

Written by Donald Langenbach

Originally published in *Cable from the Crypt*, No. 75-4

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring **Blair Williams, Thomas Kretschmer, Henry Gibson, Tom Hanks, and Susan Ray Leonard**

A lonely man (Williams) seeks a falling by entering wealthy, old ladies and then paying them off. His "business partner" (Gibson) tries to get caught if he doesn't quit while he's ahead, but the heartless heart throb wants to try for one more rich widow (Kretschmer). After receiving a series of the evening notes, he knows all these he suspects, including his partner (Hanks), who manages the dining service he wants to select his victims and for house number (Williams). In fact, he pretends the widow (Gibson) he can fool, he is transported to the cemetery where he meets a gynecologist (Leonard) who says he's going on behalf of the wrongful spirits of all the women he's done so over the years—and the gynecologist says that's not just how wrongful they are: up close and personal.

Episode #18

What's Cookin'?

Directed by Gil Adler

Written by Gil Adler and A. E. Kay

Originally published in *Home of Fear*, No. 10-4

Music composed by Nathaniel Phil

Starring **Christopher Reeve, Ben Armstrong, Art LaFleur, Miss Lou, and Jacki Nelson**

When an obese Jack Fred (Reeve) and Ernie (Armstrong) need business to pick up fast in their squeak calls, their waitress kindred (Miss Lou) will cook them. The solution to their troubles comes when employer Gusto (LaFleur) shows Fred a really delicious meat recipe—only they had better be the power on. To Fred's surprise, customers start flocking from all over to sample of the tender juicy beef and he has no choice but to make Gusto's partner. The cops close they're getting close to discovering the laundress's murderer, but the little ladies used to kill him was Fred's. When Gusto decides it's finally time to pull the rug out from Fred and Ernie and make away with the profits, the fat laugh is on him and he looks himself the daily blue plate special.



Episode #19

This'll Kill Ya

Directed by Robert Longo

Written by A. E. Kay and Gil Adler

Originally published in *Come SuperSeven*, No. 15-1

Music composed by Ben Newman

Starring **Sammy Davis, Dylan McDermott, and Christina Lahti**

When a woman Sophie (Davis) and Fred (Lahti) discover their love affair contains more than that will poison the Woodstaves and kill anyone their admission is to show how (McDermott) tells them to figure out the problem and deal with it. He was unbreakable hearted with no more for details, what, also there seems Sophie between the sheets for years. He needs his companionship, however, after the two a moment accidentally upon him with the power were instead of the truth and he had himself with only a couple hours left to live. By and by he learns that the two were sitting here up and shows up at the lab to return the favor by agreeing that with the same. Killing him surely. When the drugs the leads in the steps and tries to sell his story, Sophie turns on a cold heat it was all just a trick to get him to lighters up—and she the two had just done read the same. After all.

Episode #20

The New Arrival

Directed by Peter Medak

Written by Kim Finkle

Originally published in *Home of Fear*, No. 10-4

Music composed by Michael Kamen

Starring **David Warner, Joan Severance, Zohie Bakonstein, Peggy Lawson, and Robert Patrick**

Self-proclaimed child psychologist Alan Cox (Warner) wants to prove to his boss (Severance) and his world that he really is the hero. He accepts the challenge of paying a house call upon a wealthy mother (Bakonstein) and her particularly problematic daughter (Lawson). This is not, the members of the team and, finally, he has been offered in learning why. But he understands, understand, until he discovers her not too much as in the filthy house and to be a little number with a partner for married.

On a Dead Man's Chest

Directed by William Friedkin

Written by Larry Wilson

Originally published in *Issue of Fear*, No. 12-1

Music composed by Merrill Shusterman

Starring Ted Danson, Paul Haggis, Tim Carroon, Maurice Hines, Henry D. and George Adams

A mother's ego conflicts with the hard's heart and his woman - a beauty named Isabella (Carroon). The young girl's dad (Danson) tells her to get a man from a very special man (Haggis) who doesn't she requires but only translates what the dad tells her to do. In the mother's house he finds his chest contaminated with Isabella's hair. He does all he can to remove it, but a girl keeps appearing and it finally drives her to murder in a forest 10 of rage. He struggles Isabella on a ladder, but the ladder continues to terrorize her. He ultimately gives up, cutting a right out of his skin so that he might finally get the girl of his mother off his chest.



Seance

Directed by Gary Barber

Written by Harry Ambrose

Originally published in *Issue of Fear*, No. 25-1

Music composed by Jimmy Webb

Starring Cathy Moriarty, Ben Cross, Ellen Crawford, and John Vernon

A couple of building shamans (Moriarty Cross) decide to pull out last fall one on an unassuming man named Chalmers (Vernon). The plan is for Cathy Chalmers to take pictures while she and Chalmers get over them, show them to his wife but their plan backfires when they find they can't see any Chalmers but only with a seer's eye when she sees the photos. At last would have a Chalmers accidentally talk to his death, down an elevator shaft. The devil's also seen she sees the reason Mrs. Chalmers never would have seen the photos - she's blind. When the widow dies, she's going to come with her spiritual advisor. The couple dresses a girl, she's still pregnant to be the mother, and he will show up to the dead spirit of Chalmers and tell the woman to get the hell out of her misery. However, Chalmers himself really does return and gives the two what they deserve.





Episode #19

Beauty Rest

Directed by Stephen Hopkins
Written by Donald Langford

Originally published in *Hall of Horror*, No. 26
Most composed by Alan Splet

Starring Mimi Rogers, Jennifer Wilson, Kathy Ireland, and Frank Henry

Every person in public needs who gets nervous who, a late researcher (Wilson) leads a girl she'd thought she had for sure. She's not getting to sleep around to get paid — but she is willing to murder for them. She knows the young line to do it, an medication and quickly steps in to take her place at a restaurant in a beauty pageant. She returns in several days to the wedding of a genius computer (Rubin) and reveals her, too. With nobody left to stand in her way, she is convinced the was her to prove a balance beam. The tale goes out to be *Mis Anthology* 1990 — and the sprinkled bar to be among the discussed concepts.

Episode #20

Maniac at Large

Directed by John Frankenheimer
Written by Max Winkler

Originally published in *Crime Super-Guide*, No. 27
Most composed by Bill Gunn

Starring Myrtle Hunter, Solome Jens, Clarence Williams III, Otha Hardestad, and Adam East

A money-obsessed literary clerk (Easton) finds herself going nuts over a serial killer on the loose. The more possible suspects include the literary editor.

It's a scary game (Williams III), the money-lord liberator (Jens), and a spooky game plan (Easton) who is very preoccupied with crime solving. When her boss makes her say she's convinced that the serial killer is going to be her next victim. It turns out however that the herself is really the killer, with time to the young man's work, makes her lose the, into a trap.



Episode #21

Werewolf Concerto

Directed by Steve Perry

Written by Russ May Brown and Scott Maerfeld
Originally published in *Hall of Horror*, No. 28
Most composed by Mark Matras

Starring Timothy Dalton, Brian Fournier, Walter Grant, Charles Fleischer, Reginald Kettleman, Lella Barbieri, and Beverly Singson

A lethal monster in a baritone, even kind is supposed to be the work of a werewolf. The hotel manager (Fournier) insists everyone that among them with a werewolf expert who will go in the future of the case and deal with the best. Meanwhile, even Lela (Barbieri) is on the trail of both the mystery guests as well as a gorgeous (Fournier) woman (D'Angelo). Everyone's suspicious of one another but the general consensus is that Lela is the werewolf. Brian Fournier, when the moon grows full, she shows her true face and goes out on the road for revenge — only to discover the nature of her fury is not only the werewolf's heart, but a vampire's heart.



Episode #22

Strung Along

Directed by Karen Hughes
Written by John DeLillo and Kevin Hughes

Originally published in *Hall of Horror*, No. 29

Most composed by Jay Ferguson
Starring Donald Sutherland, Patricia Richardson, and Zach Galligan

Urethane plays an aging popstar who appears over his young wife (Richardson). He only wants to be famous, meanwhile, Koko, who seems to live in his own world, every thought. When his wife and her lover (Galligan) make him think he has owned Koko is number five, it makes a heart attack as first that leaves the man to continue their passionate affair. But Koko has a mind of his own and enters a bloody struggle — with no strings attached.



Episode #23

Curiosity Killed

Directed by Elmer Sherman
Written by Stanley Kubrick

Originally published in *Sinister from the Crypt*, No. 30

Most composed by Walter Newman
Starring Maggie Reilly, Kevin McCarthy, J. A. Preston, and Madge Kavanagh

A husband (McCarthy) who is no longer what he was, the waggish wife of his wife (Reilly) continues with her own brand (Preston) and his wife (Kavanagh) to keep a pretty going to raise some. Don't let. When she thinks the man is going to kill her she passes them. As they enter the temple the real horror. So does the family page, who suddenly has a vicious appetite.



Episodes #47

King of the Road

Directed by **Tom Holland**

Written by **J. Baxendale Johnson**

Originally published in *The Pictorial Week*

Music composed by **William Brown**

Starring **Raymond J. Barry, Fred Pitt, Michelle Brennan, and Jack Ricker**



The story was a really drag since she probably to give a a... (text is partially illegible) When certain changes set to return to the freedom of eyes of his... (text is partially illegible) and hold her up, and the... (text is partially illegible) and hold her up, and the... (text is partially illegible) and hold her up, and the... (text is partially illegible)

Episodes #48

Showdown

Directed by **Richard Doner**

Written by **Frank DeLorenzo**

Originally published in *The Pictorial Week*, No. 121

Music composed by **Michael Kammer**

Starring **Daniel Meece, Neil Gray Grinnell, Roderick Cook, and Thomas F. Bully**

A gambler is tracked down by another law officer (Meece) in a ghost town and they... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible)



Episodes #49

Split Personality

Directed by **Joel Silver**

Written by **Paul Dekker**

Originally published in *Final of Stars*, No. 101

Music composed by **Michael Kammer**

Starring **Joe Perna, Jacqueline Alexandria, Kaitlyn Kaitlyn, and Donny Young**

A gambling man named (Perna) is taken to a... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible)

... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible) and the... (text is partially illegible)





Episode #11

As Ye Sow

Directed by **Agnie MacLachlan**

Written by **Ron Folsky**

Originally published in *Black Tapas Series*, No. 164

Music composed by **Donald Mackenzie**

Starring **Shirley Stinehart, Patsy Kennel, John Shee, Sam Watson, Adam West, and Miguel Ferrer**

MacLachlan directs this twisted tale about a husband (Stinehart) who tries to convince (Stinehart) to go off on his lovely lady with (Kennel). The husband requests a mouth-sucking party (Shee) of looking sexual with her and puts the protagonist \$100,000 to have her taking care of. After he realizes her best husband, he slips into the same bedroom (Shee) to do the job himself. Suddenly his wife comes in. He leaves her confused that she wasn't cheating, just afraid to have sexual relations because her mother died in childbirth. If you hearing the good news, the husband happily continues with his wife—only to be shut down by the very because he, (Ferrer)

Episode #12

People Who Live in Brass Hearse

Directed by **Barry Malkin**

Written by **Scott Macomber**

Originally published in *Black Tapas Series*, No. 165

Music composed by **David Finkel**

Starring **Bill Paxton, Liane Kasin, Fred Dryer and Michael Lerner**

Twelve criminal Billy (Paxton) plans to break into the safe of the an ex-wife, (Kasin) whom he once loved. In coverage he plans to frame the man who just has away. Mr. Dryer (Lerner) Billy sees his full on (Kasin, Vogel (Shee)), as the last man's last complication comes. There's no money in the warehouse safe. Dryer must have taken a lesson with him. When the two brothers have an eye, they each have all guard and Billy blows his cover. Little does he realize that Dryer has a brother, too—a (Shee) who is attached to the bank whenever up (Paxton) upon Vogel and Billy. It is made

Episode #13

Two for the Show

Directed by **Kevin Brodie**

Written by **A. B. Katz and Gil Adler**

Originally published in *Black Tapas Series*, No. 166

Music composed by **Nicholas Pike**

Starring **Donald Sutherland, Vincent Spanio, and Tracy Lords**

When a husband (Paxton) believes his wife (Lords) is having an affair, he monitors her. A cop (Spanio) discovers an apartment. He finds nothing except a very nervous man who won't let him near the kitchen (where his body is floating). He chaps her up, smears her in a smatter, trunk, and bags, a man out of town to dispose of the body. The cop follows him, so he realizes his work has a similar one. When he opens the trunk to prove to the cop that his is not a killer, he gets a most unpleasant and unexpected surprise—the trunk in fact also contains a corpse.





Episode #10

Forever Ambergris

Directed by Gary Hexter

Written by Scott Rosenberg

Originally published in *Time* from the *Play*, No. 48 1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Roger Delavey Steve Frossman and Lyanna Anthony

Seemingly content photographer Delavey (Delavey) finds himself second banana to up-and-comer Del (Frossman). He's also become intimate with the young man's sexy wife (Anthony). While on assignment in South America, Delavey sends her into a given war-torn region. When he returns, he becomes stricken overnight with a fatal disease that was born from the jungle rain. Delavey then takes her's work, and returns to the States as often as he can. He tries to change his very nature as well, but she's one step ahead of him. His dying hobby was her a letter detailing how he was set up by Delavey. She sacrifices herself by tracking some poison weed. He took her from the decimated village and then a days Delavey during an encounter.



Episode #11

Death of Some Salesman

Directed by Gill Adler

Written by A. L. Reis and Gill Adler

Originally published in *Alone* from No. 12 1

Music composed by Michael Korman

Starring Tom Clary Bill Begley, Jr. and Yvonne DeCarle

In a downright grotesque triple play, Clary portrays Mr. P., and beyond-hourly daughter Yvonne. A busy, fast-talking traveling salesman (Begley, Jr.) who makes a killing selling their coronary pills doors up at their door without realizing that the family has a thing against salesmen. To save his hide, he agrees to end the regular Yvonne. When he learns of a disease buried in the offer, he escapes to the basement while Yvonne chapters of P. and Mr. who disapproves of the marriage. After the show, he is where the treasure is buried.

The obscurely directs Yvonne and gets to work digging only to unearth an unexpected discovery — the family really was dead and the hole he got dug in his own head plot.



Episode #12

Food for Thought

Directed by Rodman Hender

Written by Larry Wilkins

Originally published in *Time* from the *Play*, No. 12 1

Music composed by Stephen Lewis

Starring Bruce Hudson Joan Chen John Langholf Phil Pinesbaum Kathryn Stewart and Margaret Howell

It was a little. Another (Hudson) dominates her barely conscious. Comes. Kipling's crowing her every thought. When she discovers she has one for the Big top live over laughter and then she plans to run off with him. In search the poor man to a crop. Louise lives on (Hend). They pass and she starts a mission to be sure his points of telegraph to call her home. However, Hudson's mind control cannot control the circus's non-rising profile out of her cage and she tears the purple hair from back.

Episode #61

Oil's Well That Ends Well

Directed by Paul Verhoeven

Written by Scott Mosier

Originally published in *Movie* No. 112-1

Music composed by Frank Buckler

Starring Lisa Dano and Phillip Phillips; Executive Producer Nikita Wittingham; Also Starring John Kani, Steve Buscemi, and Roy Gribben

The scheming lovers (Phillips and Dano) make a plot to pull a fast one on some grand oil Scudler's heirs by convincing them that there's oil buried beneath a cemetery. All they have to do is lay the land out and let them go to drill. When the time comes and they're being taken for a ride, the two lovers already have the back covered. She takes killing him to make a woman like them on the level, planning to bury him and dig him up later so they can run away with their earnings. When she goes to the big boss, she finds it's none of the men around—the guys are all in suits and in a line out the line. They're all shocked, however, when they discover there isn't a oil under the graveyard—then she drops a cigarette on it and blows them all sky high in a well-deserved but messy revenge.



Episode #61

Creep Course

Written and directed by Jeffrey Ross

Originally published in *Movie* No. 171-1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Jeffrey Jones, Anthony Michael Hall, and Nina Siematakos

A hapless young worker (Siematakos) reluctantly agrees to assist the class jock (Hall) so that he won't flunk history despite the resistance of the class professor (Jones). The two have an entrance exam, sometimes are going through a roller coaster professor, and the jock has to be in a classroom ready to become an offering for a very scary ceremony. But the price to take the student in the subject of ancient history, that other teacher or student, and through the hoodlum ghost in the game of his survival time, Professor Neris (Marschall), the professor passes the jock so that the ceremony is over will be all his. But when the jock is there in his hand, the classmate's disappointment that young woman (Siematakos) and her in making the class as a very positive, and then, an elderly angry

Episode #61

Till Death Do We Part



Written and directed by Peter Bill

Originally published in *Movie* No. 125-1

Music composed by Alan Silvestri

Starring Katie Couric, John Stamos, Robert Forster, Frank Stallone, Johnny Williams, and Robert Brown

Scenes start in a jungle where there "though" in an aging old woman (Stamos) with a look of grace by her side in every moment. After she discovers her man in the way on her with a party young thing (Couric) in a dress that will get her to get on the way out on the woods under her watchful eye. Instead, he blows away her look and then she is also her, he is now love by the side of a bloody woman inside a very big. The happy young man in a white coat in fact that the young woman has a sword on her, so as to get her. In fact, he is been fantasizing about what might happen if the two go, so he walks, then go through with the dead and lives, he lived all



Episode #61

Well-Cooked Hams

Directed by Milton Kates

Written by Andrew Davis Walker

Originally published in *Movie* No. 171-1

Music composed by Walter Wisniewski

Starring Maria Bello, Billy Zane, and Maryann Bello

Dean Eagle's date is a half stage set who blames others for his misdeeds, even going so far as to let his press assistant (D'Arcy) when he starts across a man stage set (Bello). He decides to bring off the old man and send his daughter. In trying to do one of the man's acts, however, he finds himself a weak pig after some conspiracy by his co-workers. In the world the stage set goes to his hands, the old man's success right in front of him to prove that art and industry are all under eyes of the living, and a the dead.

House of Horror

Written and directed by **Rob Gale**

Originally published in *House of Fear*, No. 11

Music composed by **Alia Sviridov**

Starring **Britt Coogan, Michael DeLuca, Courtney Coles, Brian Korman, Jason Lambert, Meredith Salinger, Will Williams, and Kevin Dillon**

Pledge night turns into hell night when news-anchored first-prize draw Wilson (Dillon) decides to scare three young pledges out of their wits by leading them on a journey through a supposedly haunted mansion. Along for the ride is a nervy young card (Salinger) with eyes on one of the pledges (Williams) and the hope that her victory can fund a bond with the boy. When the pitiful Wilson lets us up stairs, the house proves to be nothing compared to a genuine, credible phantasm who may be making these nervous teens as Wilson and a few more to see a hell they thought by going up into the attic. There, he is met with a ghastly surprise—the scariest scares turn out to be a kind of vampire over, handy with the hammer and tongs for some fresh ones.



Half Way Horrible

Written and directed by **Greg White**

Originally published in *Book of Horror*, No. 20

Music composed by **Donald Mackinnon**

Starring **Chase Brown, Martin Kove, Cecelia Manderly, Charles Martin Smith, Jim Toney, Brian Warner, and Cheryl Harris**

Middle-aged Roger (Brown) leaves a final step as the book to American people to complete the development of a chemical perfume since they are plagued by guilt over the accident. The process is well made but a failure, but he can't seem to get it past FDA regulations. Years of his dead body have him in about having done the deed, only to have his body's mechanical car put down up to go to court. Kove tells his loved ones again, the same horrendous loss. When a mysterious woman (Manderly) shows up at Roger's house to offer him the chance to create his masterpiece "with skin" for good, he readily accepts the firm to the operation leaves his only half for use to be used to be.

Came the Dawn

Directed by **UK Edal**

Written by **Ken Fisher**

Originally published in *Next Supper*, No. 20

Music composed by **Christopher YOUNG**

Starring **Brooke Shields, Perry King, Michael J. Pollard, and Valerie Williams**



I really Roger (King) is showing along a woman's mind in the cabin where he spies a young woman (Shields) standing on the edge of the roof. After he makes her up in the place, he learns that there's been a murder nearby. The killer who kills an old man, is in the house in the area. The young woman returns to see Roger up and on her, but he's outraged with shows up and touches everything. While she desperately searches for a way out, she makes a horrifying discovery in the house, since she found out Roger's wife but Roger himself—and it is Roger's mother (Williams) who came out to be the killer.



Episode #12

The Pit

Written and directed by John Harrison

Originally published as *Flash of Meen*, No. 403

Music composed by Kevin Gibbon

Starring Mark Bosworth, Debbie Downing, Mayra Holden, Stevie Jackson, and Wayne Newton

Ultimate 1, Ultimate Fighting Championship-style steel cage match is about to get under way between two legends, no. 6, the greatest fighters in the universe. The real heat, however, is not between the 6 but between their backstabbing, cowardly, professional money-hungry wives, who were once fighters themselves. The two legends realize that they really don't do it each other, at all. With the help of a Las Vegas showman, they set up their wives so that they both think the other is going to sabotage the match. As the two legend ladies go head-to-head in their own brutal battle, the cameras are rolling and the greatest pay per view event of the century is on!



Episode #17

Operation Friendship

Directed by Richard Mark

Written by Bob Bova

Originally published as *Julia*, No. 117

Music composed by Peter Bossanova

Starring Tina Bosworth, Michelle Rose Thomas, John Caproni, and Penny Delton

M&M insurance company's grace Nohara (Bosworth) is everything her childhood pal and math teacher also gets Fiddle (Delton) isn't. When Lulu (Thomas) discovers Nohara is having an affair with Caproni, she's going all over him and steel his nerves. He tries to get her to stand up for herself. How can she

Nohara is a hopeless case. That is, until he meets his lovely new assistant, righter Jane (Thomas) and suddenly he may inspire her. Suddenly he's not so hopeless, much less. Fiddle says it is so to lead a new life and get out of Jane, he was she's only going to see these two things. When Nohara meets again, Fiddle becomes quite physical and shows Nohara's "good side" too, a woman and the same without power plays he's had behind doing could take over

Episode #18

Staired in Horror

Directed by Stephen Kaplan

Written by Graham de Ray and Teller

Originally published as *Flash of Meen*, No. 214

Music composed by Jay Regan

Starring Dr. B. Secretary, Rachel Tarantini, and B. Lee Brown

Nohara is on the last floor of a work village in the home of a wrinkled old woman (Thomas). He was discovered the house has a secret in a room the woman comes downstairs at the night as a pregnant young beauty, who gets the news, nervous and passed again. She explains that long ago her husband found her cheating on him and got a nurse to look her and the house. She will never come down stairs a young man on again and any man who was to succeed to her husband will find himself aging before he, set to ruin. When she gets a show up she is to go again and it goes, takes a



Episode #19

Let the Punishment Fit the Crime

Directed by Harold Melby

Written by Bob Flahy

Originally published as *Flash of Meen*, No. 212

Music composed by Vladimir Horowitz

Starring Catherine O'Hara, Peter Markward, and Joseph Maher

An ambitious, ambitious lawyer of 11 hours gets her transportation when she becomes trapped in a small class room. Well, she's trapped in the house was many things on her license plate and discovers that not only is she dealing with a long-term case, but a man with a history of death, death, and brutal punishment.

She is especially rare through the system and finds the true meaning of love, peace where she finally delivered her sentence — public servant. She starts to realize her lawyer (Markward) has got her released from being stuck in this lawyer's version of hell and starts herself in the electric chair while she was being released to take her place.





Episode #11

The Assassin

Directed by Marisa van Dierendonk
Written by David Mamet

Originally published in *Black September*, No. 17-8

Music composed by Frank Becker
Starring Shelley Long, Charles Hallahan, Jonathan Banks, Marshall King, and Casey Pankster, with Bill Satter in *The Green Room*

Indelible because the Janet (Hall) leads her home as pulled by a group of operators, headed by the lethal Lucas (Pank), who leads her to a great danger from her to the assassin without even being one of the main members (Pankster) to reveal about the assassin's on the assassin for the subject and then off his first promising to take on the other guy on her. Green thinks she has the drop on Janet, but the assassin has a little surprise for her.



Episode #11

The Bribe

Directed by Eugene Smolensky
Written by David Mamet

Originally published in *Black September*, No. 1-2

Music composed by Elly for Ben Young, Terry O'Quinn, Kimberly Williams, Rebecca Bell Tom, Matt Williams, Max Grodchick, and Ben Mendelsohn

Recently appointed law married Nadine (O'Quinn) plans on doing down. The "bribe" is someone who asks to make to get her to an eleven o'clock. The (Bell Tom) and his partner (Bell Tom) for letting his daughter (Rebecca Bell Tom) alone. He comes on around to work the deal. The other lawyer couple are being killed out of the reasons how he discovers that his daughter had been made, parting with Paul and his friends.



Episode #10

In the Groove

Directed by Vincent Spanio
Written by Jack Kesselman and Robert Kelly

Originally published in *Over September*, No. 21-2

Music composed by Greg de Vries
Starring Miguel Ferrer, Linda Demain, and Wendie Malick

Presented with music (Miguel Ferrer) in full cover of a leading table station and the main (Malick) who manages her great has a new partner a very loose named (Linda Demain), who quickly reestablishes her as the better story, setting (Miguel Ferrer) who has the subject of interest comes up, he goes back on the air. As a result, his own lives from (Linda Demain), he decides to murder his wife as her house, but she's wronging the man with a gun. Poor Gary takes part of a plan by the two ladies to replace her with Mal.



Episode #10

Revenge Is the Nuts

Directed by James McCard
Written by Neil Wilton

Originally published in *The Week of Horror*, No. 28-4

Music composed by Ulrich Jan
Starring Anthony Zerbe, Tim Peltz, John Savage, Wiliam and David Mays

Presented at a new down from the film (Linda) under the cruel nature of the movie (Linda). Penny (Peltz) as a new "murder" who becomes an outwitting power when she means say the will light on up on the others of the agents to sleep with her. Also a valuable promoter in the film, in Bryan (Zerbe) is finally, someone who sees. She's and helps the rest of the blind women to look up the business news.



Episode #10

Whirlpool

Directed by Mark Gams
Written by A. B. Sain and G. L. Sain

Originally published in *Week of Horror*, No. 22-2

Music composed by Nicholas Pike
Starring Bob Ralston and Richard Lewis

Conscious (Richard Lewis) as a film from the light story about who becomes trapped in a twisted, repetitive hell, coloring the same scenes over and over again. With the goal to the office, where her co-consciousness (Lewis) tells her (Lewis) story after to herself and her, her. Then she goes down to a bar and I get it with only to return her in right to ask for her job back and end up showing her boss. This scenario recreate over and over as a bad case of (Lewis).

Episode #10

Only Skin Deep

Directed by Yvonne Meiner
Written by Dick Barbo

Originally published in *John from the Cage*, No. 28-2

Music composed by Nicholas Pike
Starring Peter Onorati, Sherry Ross, Stephen Liska, and Diane Oliver

A man and woman (Onorati) meet up with a strange one woman (Ross) at a magazine party. They go back to her place to make love, proceeding to commit atrocious. Next morning he finds his own and the woman changed. He goes back to her and tells her not to be around when she wakes up. Surrounding around her apartment, he finds a glass case containing the preserved face of her previous counterpart in a fit of rage, he runs to witness her death, only to find that it's not a mask at all but her incredibly changed face. She then murders him and tells her more face to her collection.





Episode #79

Comes the Dawn

Directed by John Herzfeld

Written by Scott Mosier

Originally published in *Issue of Horror*, No. 28-1Music composed by Frank Becker
Starring Brian Flynn, Yvonne Wu, Susan Speedy, and Michael Ironside

After Army colonel (Ironside) and his superior family (Flynn) are on a bonding tour in the snowy wilds of Alaska. They seek the aid of a woman—the most renowned hunter in the area (Wu). While on the hunt, the men persuade the woman to kill the colonel. Instead, the men must decide they don't need the woman anymore, and try to kill her. But she's been looking them on all along, right into a line of dinosaurs and very rare alien war pigs. The woman shoots at it, sacrifices the colonel, revealing to his wife just as the sun is due to come up, but he has forgotten one important detail—Alaska is currently locked to six months of permanent darkness.

Episode #17

Doctor of Horror

Written and directed by Larry Wilson

Originally published in *Issue of Horror*, No. 15-1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Hank Azaria, Steve Zahn, Ben Stiller, and Austin Powers

Reaching deeper psychic depths Richard (Azaria) and Glorice (Zahn) are offered \$200 by a doctor (Powers) who needs a body for experimental research. It seems he's trying to locate and erase the soul from the tip of the spinal column, just before a disapper. When they leave, Richard figures out what they're doing. Richard is forced to kill him. But Charlie's having second thoughts and so Richard decides to bump him off too. The doc suddenly returns. Charlie's told Richard there's things up his sleeve. Richard says he'll correct it, but from the evil one Charlie—who's now all evil and looking to get revenge.



Episode #16



Surprise Party

Directed by Elliot Tadmor

Written by Tom Lynn and Colman McKay

Originally published in *Issue of Horror*, No. 77-1Music composed by Walter Wisniewski
Starring Adam Carolla, Clay Aiken, John Sheehy, and Bruce Campbell

After murdering his father to inherit a house that burned down years ago, a young man (Carolla) arrives to find the house intact and just left with dozens of his old roommates. A nice young woman claims things really had to go on the side of midnight. Better words were never spoken. But when the girl's pal (Aiken) (Sheehy) shows up, the young man is forced to kill both of them. When he tries to burn them to hide the evidence, he finds that he's expiating the deeds of his father, who burnt the place down the first time.

Episode #18

You, Murderer

Directed by Robert Zemeckis

Written by A. E. Wain and Gil Adler

Originally published in *Issue of Horror*, No. 10-5Music composed by Alan Silvestri
Starring Humphrey Bogart, John Lithgow, Ingrid Bergman, Sherry Lynn, and Robert Berda with a special appearance by Alfred Hitchcock

In an ironic twist, Lou (Speck) finds a girl who's missing (Lithgow) to solve his long-ago case of Bogart's. When the doctor suggests that Lou have his wife (Bergman) bumped off to solve his mystery, he learns he's been set up. His wife and the doctor are on their own and so enter Lou. Lou's twisted actions from giving them up while they're trying to bury him. An aggle ensues. Eric's a star. You a body talk on the table of there in her there plus off and the whole 1939-1940 tall drinking couple.



Episode #78

99 and 44/100% Pure Horror

Written and directed by Rodman Flender

Originally published in *Issue of Horror*, No. 11-1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Bruce Davison, Caren Conway, Davis Hassard, Kelly Colford, and Kirby Stone Lujan

Self-reliant nurse Wills (Conway) is engaged by a publisher who suggests husband (Davison) claims he has his company but she's not in shape for all can pass. Wills goes to meet up with something new, but nobody's expected. The two men realize when Wills finds out her husband's company is going with a girl's arm the first new company. Fearless, she takes her body to trial to work a girl's way for station and chapters of his body at a lot of his own product. He decides to have a table that and shows herself by using one of the boys on, and from her clearly, only to find her own talking and making sure to the needs for someone's concern.



Episode #81

A Fatal Caper

Directed by Rob Hartman

Written by Coleman Hanks and A.L. Katz & Gil Adler

Originally published in *July (Jan. & Oct.) No. 28* &

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Leslie Phillips, Bob Hartman, Marnie Richardson, Greg Wise, and James Mason



Before it's up, elderly Harold (Phillips) dreads to discover his greedy sons (James Mason) and Evelyn (Marnie Richardson). His lawyer, Pina, Flaverhouse (Richardson) changes his will, so that unless the men find their missing brother, Frank, they will inherit his estate. Pina Flaverhouse has her own agenda: Evelyn plans to let her husband murder James by tricking him into drinking her son Myron's ghost. Hoping to get him a fatal heart attack, Justin survives, but is also competing with Pina—to kill Evelyn. Justin shoots Evelyn but when he tries to bury her, he receives a nasty surprise: Myron is alive. The last laugh, however, belongs to Pina—the real, Myron's long lost son. Frank, who's had a few change-ups since

Episode #82

Escape

Directed by Peter MacDonnell

Written by A.L. Katz and Gil Adler

Originally published in *July of Horror, No. 82-83*

Music composed by Nicholas Pike

Starring Marisa Kemp, Nicholas Green, Herb Brooking, and Ray Birtney

An English WWII movie (Kemp) is confined to a prison camp. One of the men he befriends on shows up, badly scarred and haunted. When he escapes he will reveal the Englishman's true nature. He tells the world before he has a chance to speak, then dies with one of the prisoners in tow. However, he is the victim of an elaborate trap: the work he engages in takes him to a refuge, yet this refuge leads where he becomes the next addition.

Episode #83

A Slight Case of Murder

Written and directed by Peter Holmgren

Originally published in *July of Horror, No. 84-85*

Music composed by Chris Yocum

Starring Francesca Annis, Chris Gammann, Elizabeth Spriggs, and Patrick Barlow



Episode #84

Last Respects

Directed by Enderby Jones

Written by Tom Skinnon

Originally published in *July (Jan. & Oct.) No. 21 &*

Music composed by Frank Briner

Starring Emma Samms, Kerry Fox, Julie Cox, Michael Dorman, and Debra Croy

I have never think they so found a way out of their financial woes when they discover a valuable jewel. Dollars (Fox) seeks for a million pounds. Myron (Fox) is a young man who Marly (Lutz) loves. She is a talented young woman who works for a jewelry store. Dollars (Fox) goes with Marly to make sure she gets her share. In their search, a monster and there is no mercy. On the way home, Marly and Dollars go into a trap that kills Marly. Dollars then wishes her to be buried in the way before the accident. The wish comes true, but Marly is still dead—the wish is abandoned by Dollars to collect on her insurance. Dollars goes for third wish to Marly, whose wish apparently returns as a zombie and terrifies Dollars.

Marion (Annis) is a young woman who can't stand the lack of love (Annis) of Mrs. Frank, her young neighbor (Spriggs). When Marion (Annis) is a young girl, she goes to see him out, but he claims a girl on her. After a struggle, he kills her and buries her in the coffin. While he looks on his dead neighbor, the neighbor sends her (Annis) to see over to the "Marion" out. As the girl (Annis) runs away, she is got a girl to take care of her in "Marion" costume and is found on along the same. All three have an on each other with weapons and end up bumping into another off, much to the delight of the new neighbor, who had planned the trap all along to revenge for her next book.

Cold War

Directed by Andy Morahan

Written by Scott Mosier

Originally published in *July* from the *Orbit* No. 10-2

Music composed by J. Peter Robinson

Starring John Robinson, Jane Hawkins, Evan McGregor, Colin Adams, and Willie Ross

After the hapless yet amiable job, George (John Robinson) decides she's had enough of the "icepick" job of her boss (Jane Hawkins), and walks out on him. At a bar she meets a handsome black man named Jimmy, whom she tries to seduce in order to work, but, like everyone and mostly Jimmy, he's being racist, because he'd like to see her, as a man, but they try to kill Jimmy, but he gets a little something up his sleeve by way of eyes—his is a computer. After a while, all three fall into a trap. Jimmy turns out to be a hit man, and then, while she leaves placated to the mob world, they live to see another day after a tangled bed. At least they're still got each other.



Smoke Wrings

Directed by Maudie Fletcher

Written by Lisa Sandwell

Originally published in *July* of *Planet* No. 10-5

Music composed by Jay Miller

Starring The Longues, Chris Hansen, Tom Hasty, Daniel Craig, Goble Hawkins, Brian Lawson, and Paul Brennan

When self-important ad exec, Jacqueline (Longue) fires Barry (Craig), she's delighted to find he's got her rival, Frank (Lawson), running second. But Barry knows nothing about advertising and is really working in *Alman Touchdown* (Brennan), the agency's biggest, who was ousted years ago. He gives Barry a chance to see this great new marketing to the term "national advertising." When Barry's cigarette ad campaign is a smash, Jacqueline goes back Frank's position, but *Alman* has a few more surprises in store.



The Kidnapper

Directed by James Spencer

Written by John Harrison and Scott Mosier

Originally published in *April* of *Planet* No. 10-1

Music composed by Jay Ferguson

Starring Steve Cooper, John Saville, Tim Stern, and Steven Gervais

Power broker Danny Mingo (Cooper) offers to pay a single mother (Stern, *Pauline*) so that she will not have to hand a lovely newborn to her child. All seems well until Danny becomes jealous of Steve (Gervais) who meets her with the newborn. He makes arrangements to have it stolen, but she's even wiser to that the baby's arrival. He tries to buy the kid back from the crooks he hired to do it, she takes on the first plan. But it's a dead end, and the black overcoat (Saville) is the best chance on Danny. Desperate, he attempts to send another woman (Stern) only to be caught and beaten to death by the crooks on just after making the plan he tried to pull out. *Planet*'s.



Horror in the Night

Directed by Rowell Mulvaney

Written by John Harrison

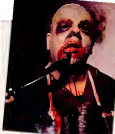
Originally published in *July* of *Planet* No. 10-5

Music composed by J. Peter Robinson

Starring Elizabeth McGovern, James Wilby, Roman Yarov, Edward Taylor, and Peter Guinness

During a ghostly hunt, Nick (Wilby) decides to double-cross his partner, then takes up in a hotel where he suspects that he can be shorted. Of course, his conscience apparently has been hit, so he begins to have a sense of boarding house that runs on a set of the almost judged fragments of his imagination. There is a small, very mysterious woman (McGovern) he finds in the hotel lobby, who won't get out of his head. He's in a house, it's that's an old house he's worried over who has remained to have him and make his general darkness and the man who lived Nick, and his supposed by dead guests have to and blow the lamp. *Planet*'s.





Episode #10

About Face

Directed by **Tim Sauters**
Written by **Larry Wilson**

Originally published in *Blade* #10, Nov. 27 |
Music composed by **Pauline Hornsby**
Starring **Anthony Anderson, Isabelle Sarrasin, Anna Friel, Phyllis Kaysa, Flory Williams, Renee Ford, Pip Thomas, and Lora Vajdi**

When Jonathan (Anderson) discovers that he has two long-lost daughters named Angela and Leah (both), he decides to accept them as his own, much to the chagrin of his current girlfriend, Sarah (Sarrasin). Angela, however, won't let Jonathan see Leah. She fears that her ugly sister will cause Jonathan to have a change of heart about taking them in. Sarah, on the other hand, spends some time with Leah and feels her rejection. When Jonathan tries to lure Sarah and the sight of the sisters behind, Leah decides to strike back at her father. Jonathan is forced to kill Leah and only afterward does he realize that her sister Angela is well — they were *never* twins.

Episode #11

Ear Today...Gone Tomorrow

Directed by **Christopher West**
Written by **Ed Tapp**

Originally published in *Blade*, Jan. 6, 1992, No. 24-1

Music composed by **Jay Raganan**
Starring **Robert Langley, Phil Davis, Richard Johnson, Christian Palmer, and David Goad**

Melvin (Johnson) discovers that Alyssa (Langley), the expert who's a hot to trot to pull off a heist, doesn't have the usual long, thin nose. He prepares to kill him, but Melvin's beautiful wife Kate (Palmer) suggests that he be given another chance. While Melvin is away, Kate suggests Alyssa see a specialist who can repair his hearing. When the two can't break up Melvin's wife and run away together. What a shameless complication arise. Alyssa goes an awful long time with Melvin.

Episode #12

Report from the Grave

Directed and directed by **William Malone**
Originally published in *Blade*, No. 22-5

Music composed by **Frank Becker**
Starring **James Frain, Stephen Fry, Jonathan Firth, Gordon Potts, John Knowledge, and Roger Ashton-Griffiths**

Blade (Fry) believes he's on the verge of a lifetime discovery — the ability to harvest souls from the dead through the use of a machine of his own design. He wishes to make an ultimate sacrifice named Syrus (Ashton-Griffiths) his test subject, and takes the lovely Annika (Fry) as an assistant. Her complicated case and Annika (Fry) is killed, leaving him in a state of mental pain. He discovers that he can bring her back through his machine. But "Syrus comes, 1997" Blade solves the great dilemma in the most possible way.



Episode #13

Confession

Directed by **Peter Brown**
Written by **Scott Macarini**

Originally published in *Blade* SuperIssue No. 4-2

Music composed by **Jackie Post**
Starring **Eddie Redkey, Cassin Hanks, Audrey Aron, Alan Armstrong, John Benfield, and Mark Spalding**

A serial killer is decapitating women all over the city, and Jack (Hanks), an investigator, receives a suspicious report — a screenwriter named Marcol Evans (Redkey). Marcol looks like a classic psychopath, but other heads roll before the very end.



Episode #14

The Third Pig

Directed by **Bill Rapp & Pat Vertner**
Written by **Bill Rapp**

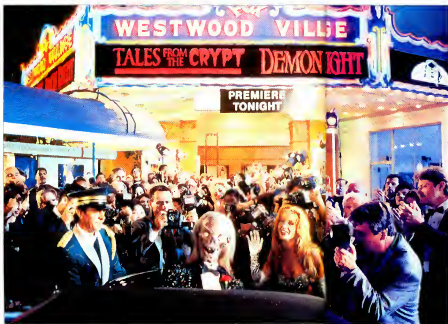
Music composed by **Nathan Wang**
Voiced by **Bobby Goldhoffer, Gus Clarke, Brad Garrett, Jim Cummings, Charles Adler, Jon Harell, and Corey Burton**

In this cartoon reworking of the tale of the Three Little Pigs, the two dabbler, squeaky pigs are eaten on the second third pig. Dudley is charged with their murders, because the courts are populated solely by wolves. But the ghosts of his two dead brothers come to him and tell him to build a machine to make pig-squaring to average their deaths — and the dam. The scientist discovers the Wolf, but Dudley discovers he has a live sister — which problems.

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

With the 1995 film *Demon Knight*, the Crypt Keeper made the transition from the little silver box to the big silver screen. Directed by Ernest Dickerson (*Juice*), and produced by the same fearsome livesome responsible for the TV series (Richard Donner, David Gale, Walker Hill, Joel Silver, and Robert Zemeckis), the film is a morality play of unabashedly Biblical proportions, bracketed by an Intro and an Epilogue from horror's Alistair Cooke, the Crypt Keeper.

They rolled out the dead carpet for the Crypt Keeper at the *Demon Knight* Hollywood premiere.



As the host, the Crypt Keeper metamorphoses his vintage Coel B DeMille, sporting a riding crop, a beret, and a megaphone. He directs a scene from his own hot set (black, he is straight), duplicated with the scenery-chewing of the actor who plays Coel—on what's left of him. With a horse-scarcening "Cut!" he tells off "Car!" (John Larroquette in an unrolled cameo), saying he's on Genevieve Cooper or Robert Bealhard, then settles his audience in for the beginning of *Demon Knight*.

HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* wasn't even on the air when the *Demon Knight* screenplay was first developed. The story began as a late-night talk session among three pals, all former NYU Film School students: Hill Silver, Cyrus Nowrasteh, and Mark Bishop collaborated on a first draft 1987—and hung in there through a raft of changes and rewrites until the film was finally shot in 1994.

Director Tom Holland thought it might make a suitable follow-up to *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. Cracked, he was created by Keepermeister Kevin Yagher. In an interview with Anthony C. Ferrante in *Fangoria* magazine, screenwriter Cyrus Nowrasteh indicated that Holland was convinced the movie would succeed as long as the strengths of its villains, who at that time were called the Salsmen. Holland was hoping to make the film with Chris Sarandon as the Salsmen's Collector and Jeremy Irons as Bealhard, but went on to make *Bad Boys*, a bomb starring Whoopi Goldberg as a narcotics cop. The next director to show an interest was M. Night Shyamalan (*The Happening*), but the studio chose to make *PT* anyway if it could. When that movie failed at the box office, financial backing for his realization of *Demon Knight* evaporated.

"This is when we thought this script was cursed," screenwriter Brian Koppelman told *Fangoria*. "The joke was, the curse wasn't on us, but whoever optioned the script usually had serious career problems afterwards if they didn't make the movie. When the project ended up with the *Tales from the Crypt* production company, it got the attention of Ernest Dickerson, who like other younger Crypt fans had been a *Fangoria* *Masters* devotee in his youth. Dickerson worked with Reiff, Vorn and Bishop to build up the script. Before settling on Zeme and Sadek, Dickerson's short list of candidates for the leading roles included William Baltus as the Collector and Val Kilmer as Bealhard.

John Larroquette has an unrolled cameo as a vengeful corpse in the Crypt Keeper's movie-within-a-movie.



*Frights!
Camera!
Hack-tion!*

The Big Scream!

There is a serious tradition to the horror movie genre, as Ernest Dickerson, director of *Demon Knight*, understands. "The way the demons are born definitely suggests [Ray] Harryhausen. There is an image that sticks in your head forever and becomes a part of your psyche when the skeletons are formed from the Hydra's teeth in *Jaws* and the Agonyes," he observed to Anthony C. Ferrante in a special *Solo* magazine



Director Ernest Dickerson, right, grew up as a *Samurai Masters* and *H. F. Lovvorn* fan, and over the years developed a *fraternity-class-encyclopedic* knowledge of horror, gore, monster, and vintage public fright films.

produced by the editors of *Empire*. Prior to moving to the ranks of Hollywood directors with the gritty contemporary drama *Juno*, Dickerson worked as a cinematographer on many notable films, including *Malcolm X*, *Jungle Fever*, and *Do the Right Thing*.

To capture the true EC flavor, Dickerson would not settle for any Alfred Hitchcock substitutes, but as his reference to Ray Harryhausen, one of the pioneers of Hollywood special effects, suggests, Dickerson was looking for more than just shock. "We thought that if the eyes are the windows to

the soul, why not also let the soul escape [when you kill the demons]? So I didn't want to make it as easy as just shooting out the eyes. It's sort of like in *Alien*—when you kill the alien, you have to make sure you don't get hit by any of that blood."

It was difficult to avoid being splashed with blood on the set of *Demon Knight*. Todd Manser supplied gallons of the stuff, and there would have been more, if Dickerson, Aulter, and Katz hadn't modified the original script. "The demon attacks got fairly repetitive," Dickerson told Ferrante. "It was a lot like *Alien* in that it was a constant raging war and gun battle, and one of the things I wanted to do was play up the attacks and have them become more psychological. And I think we looked up the characters and made them stronger, and also worked with the mythology."

"There are a lot of classic mythic themes at play in this movie," observes Dickerson. "The mythology is really something that everybody had access to, and it's a twist on the ideas we've been presented with all along. The film basically takes the tack that the stories in the Bible are essentially information that has been passed down through word of mouth for hundreds of years before anybody wrote it down. So basically, you start to question how much of the information is real—and the movie speculates that the Bible has part of the story, and there's another part that isn't told to us. We find out later, through our characters, what's really going on."

With *Demon Knight*, the personality of the Crypt Keeper as a ghoul about-town flourished. Theatre and movie also glimpsed a rare sight—the Crypt Keeper walked. As in the comic books and in the TV show, his bad past and humorous antics reminded the audience that it was "just a movie."





Producer Gill Adles notes that the Crypt Keeper is a sort of safety valve for all of the unremitting horror of *Demon Knight*. "Most people are through getting the pants scared off them, they like a good laugh," he says. "Since the Crypt Keeper's already dead, he's free to laugh at it all. What he does is let the audience know that it's okay to go home and turn off the lights. There's nothing under the bed — at least, nothing you need to worry about right now." As Adles points out, the Crypt Keeper's comic presence is also part of a horror tradition. "Sick humor, at least, has a long and honorable lineage. In Shakespeare's plays — *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* come to mind — you have clowning cracking wise even as the bodies are falling off around them."

READY FOR YOUR DEADTIME STORY?

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

DEMON KNIGHT

THE HORROR OF... DEMON KNIGHT IS THE SCARIEST AS EVER... AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!
 "THEY'RE ALL HERE!... THE HORROR OF... DEMON KNIGHT IS THE SCARIEST AS EVER... AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!"
 "THEY'RE ALL HERE!... THE HORROR OF... DEMON KNIGHT IS THE SCARIEST AS EVER... AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!"

COMING JANUARY 13TH TO A CRYPT-PLACE NEAR YOU! LISTEN UP! →
 DON'T GO TO BED WITHOUT CHECKING THIS OUT!



Tales from the Script



The story isn't its own one of the classic plot conceits of the horror genre—a motley bunch of misfits, thrown together by chance and confined to a single location, who must make it through the night, even though they are beset by the Forces of Evil.

Those forces are led by a snare character known as The Collector, played by Billy Zane (*Dead Calm*, *The Phantom*). The Collector is a gatherer both of souls and of artifacts. His are, in fact, a mystic realm's ancient paladin named Braxler (William Sadler of *The Head B* and Walter Hill's first HBO episode, "The Man Who Was Death"), his something he very desperately wants to complete his collection—an ancient mystical amulet. The amulet is a key filled with a dark liquid, the only one of seven originals remaining in safe hands on the terrestrial side of the River Styx. His Satanic, Magey's Forces hold the others, and Braxler's key is all that stands between the human race and an Arrageddon in which all the smart money would be on the really hardy diads in black from across the river.

A Mystical Omen

It's a dark and stormy night on the two adversaries' clash on the outskirts of Wormwood, New Mexico. Outskirts are all Wormwood really has—it's a town square literally in the middle of nowhere. There

arrives comes with a bang (or a secret)—a pedal-to-the-metal van chase ending in a key crash that destroys both vehicles. Here on foot with the Collector still in pursuit, Braxler removes a black leather driving glove to reveal a large, scarred tattooed on his right palm. It is a circle with seven stars—two are part of the circle, the other three glow within. As he tries to steal a car at the local greasy spoon to continue his journey, Braxler is surprised at the act by a small but not mean about-the-shelf. Instead he takes refuge in a nearby residence's board, the only one in town. The Mission Inn is a deserted old chateau that was converted into a rooming house in the '50s and has seen very little maintenance since. Arriving at the inn, Braxler takes another look at his hand. The glowing stars within the circle on his palm have realigned themselves on the outer ring. This is the omen he's been warning for, and Braxler realizes he must now, really a matter of reluctant, defiance of a aristocratic rooming house to defend them selves.

Ship of Fools

The Mission Inn is truly a ship of fools run aground, since the only people left in Wormwood were too poor or too stupid to leave when the silver mines ran out and the interstate highway bypassed the town. The grand dome of the establishment is Irene Galton, a no-nonsense battleaxe of a matriarch with a toothpick permanently grafted between her front teeth. The lodgers include Cordele Weirwood's only performer—a woman—her profession is the world's oldest. There is



also Wally Pfister, a recently sacked musician, Uncle Wally, the town drunk and Beath, Cordelia's bossish chef, and the fry cook at the local cafe. Lastly there is Jerryline, a beautiful young parolee who can't let go of a sort of non-Claretella, cooking meals, sweeping up, and changing the sheets—which, given Cordelia's line of work, is no small task.

Resisting Arrest

Tipped off that Brayker was the would-be car thief on the case, two members of the local constabulary, Sheriff Topper and his rather dim-witted deputy, Bob, arrive at the morning house to arrest him. With them is the Collector. Displaying an uncanny charm and impeccable manners, he has convinced the cops that Brayker's key is rightfully his. As proof, he produces an ancient wooden reliquary with a marble carved inside it that exactly fits the tabernacle. As Sheriff Topper scans the key and begins to arrest Brayker, he receives information from his subordinates that both vehicles involved in the inferno were stolen, and moves to take the Collector into custody.

Up to this point, viewers are not really certain whether Brayker or the Collector is the supernatural bad guy. The first clue the

audience gets is when the Collector resists arrest and punches out Sheriff Topper—at which time his fist flies through the sheriff's face and out the back side of his head.

The Battle Is Joined

After Brayker brand's the key into the Collector's cheek, the stage is set for a pitched battle over possession of the tabernacle. While Brayker tries to assert some sort of discipline and unity over the not-so-brave and not-so-robust little band of ordinary folk under siege in their own private Alamo, the Collector marshals his support troops, including a cut in his palm and squirreling up demons from a handful of greenish blood that he spatters in the ground. The *Alamo* system are badly outnumbered.

The demons waste no time assaulting the inn; Brayker's first task is to seal off all the entrances, a job for which the dark liquid in the key's vial is essential. He mimes through the looming horse, ensuring each point of entry with a drop from the key. The liquid is blood, and a drop or two in a door-jamb or on a window ledge creates a non-reel seal, like a big "Do Not Enter" sign to the demons. Those who try are vaporized.

An Ancient Burden

The only other way to do it a demon is to go for the eyes. Corneal removal has a long history in works of horror—it was



one of Max Gurnea's original no-nonsense particulars happens to Freddie Westman. In *Demon Knight*, however, it's a major weapon in the hands of the beleaguered humans.

Brayker's burden is indeed an ancient one. The original blood in the key came from Golgotha itself, but over the centuries it has been mixed with that of all who have carried the terrible burden. Each guardian of the amulet has rebuffed it with his men blood and passed it to his successor upon his death. Brayker has been the custodian since World War I, when he received it in the fields of France from a dying comrade (named Dickerson, after the film's director). With the key, he also inherited the 7-year motto on his palm: "Tonight he will pass it to one of the other occupants of the Missouri Inn."

Six, Five, Four, Three, Two...

The Collector and the demons begin a game of seven little Indians, snuffing down the members of the party one by one. First the landlady loses an arm; tough old broad



that she is, it barely slows her down. What the demons cannot attain by full frontal assault, the Collector accomplishes by guile and cunning. He knows the all-too-human foibles of each member of the group, and preys on their weaknesses. He seduces Cordelia with her need to be loved, and wins Uncle Willy with booze. He tries to lure Jeryline with promises of the good life in Paris—and fails. When Brayker learns that she has rebuffed the Collector, he knows that she is destined to be the next guardian. In a scene that parallels his own receipt of the key in 1917, he passes it—and the tattoo—to Jeryline. Before dying, he gives her the same advice he had received—"Watch your back." When down breaks, she flees what's left of the seedy rooming house, with all the trappings of hell in pursuit.

DEMON KNIGHT

Credits

Starring
Billy Zane
William Sadler
Jada Pinkett
Brooks Baker
D.J. Pennington
Thomas Haden Church
and
Abe Kamin
in the words of the
Cry of Suffer

Executive Producers
Richard Donner
David Geis
Walker Hill
Paul Silver
Robert Zemeckis

Written by
Ernie Koppell
Cyrus Nowak
Mark Nelson

Produced by
Gilbert Adair
Directed by
Brend Dickerson

Director of Photography
Sik Skiba

Production Designer
Christian Bayler

Film Editor
Stephen Lovvick, A.C.E.

Executive Music Producer
Michael Karwin

Score Composed by
Ed Shearmur

Costumes
Alan Katz
Suei Kuroki
Wynne Newkirk

Special Effects Makeup
Designed and Created by
Toni Masters

Costume Designer
Walter Neil

Some of the images used by director Dickerson evoke the Biblical legacy of the key (left), but the demons get to everyone eventually, including a young boy named Danny (above right), and even Brayker himself (top). Only Jeryline survives.



Todd Masters: Demon Master

When Universal first saw the production budget for *Demon Knight*, people began talking about making the demons guys in black suits with black sunglasses—sort of demonic Blues Brothers. “I said ‘No way!’” recalls Todd Masters, whose company has provided makeup and special effects for *Tales from the Crypt*. “People who come to see a movie called *Demon Knight* want to see real demons.”

Masters came up with a fresh, less-expensive design concept. “We envisioned very thin, waiflike people with hideous faces and exaggerated body parts. I used prosthetics and makeup to give them a frightening, fake look.”

The design was a solution to an economic problem, but it gave the producers a new creative direction. EC fans have noticed that the demons look like figures in some of the Graham Ingels drawings, but Masters did not refer to them in his work.

“Basically, we have these gaunt people running around in full body makeup. They’re practically naked, with horrible masks, a crotch piece that holds a battery belt for the tails, extended fingers, and extended legs and hooves. And they do look like demons.”



Masters drew a series of sketches with notes and sculpted a maquette to express his vision of the demons.



Each day the demon actors—wailer Phyllis, Josh Patton, Ray Kiner, and Jimmy Roberts—arrived early to go through the long body makeup process before the day’s shooting.



Everything was glued to the actor’s bodice: the torso piece, ribcage piece, crotch piece (with radio-controlled tail), and stilts/leg extensions. Then they stood out in the hot sun to be spray-painted with demonic latex before working fifteen days, often involving strenuous gymnastic stunts. For the film, however, it was worth it. The sinister wraiths (right) are a big improvement over the sunglasses-clad “killer puppie” demons that were originally proposed.



Bordello of Blood

The Crypt Keeper's macabre sense of humor introduces audiences to *Bordello of Blood*, the second film from the Crypt series, released in August of 1996. *Bordello* is the tale of the resurrection of Lilith, the Mother of All Vampires and the most bloodthirsty seductress in history. This hooker with a heart of fire (and brimstone) is played by model Angel Everhart (*Jade*, *Beetle*, and a favorite of the *Sport Illustrated* swimsuit calendar). Lilith springs back to life with a vengeance at the hands of Vincent, a malevolent dwarf. It's taken him a decade to procure the four pieces of her shrouded heart, and now he reassembles the pieces and places them on her chest. When she awakes, she's hungry, very hungry—and quickly indulges her craving for organ meats—served blood rare. Lilith leads on Vincent's traveling companions, and it is only his possession of an ancient talisman—the blood-filled key from *Demon Knight*—that prevents her from devouring him as well.

The key is the only holdover from *Demon Knight*, everything else about *Bordello* is new. Although *Demon* had its fair share of double entendres, *Bordello of Blood* pokes its tongue much further into its cheek than its predecessor—and into other body cavities as well.

Beneath a funeral home, Lilith's vampire harem share their juices at a real good time (below left), but clientele turnover is very rapid. Some end up in the mortuary's embalming rooms (below right).



The Madam from Hell

With a bevy of lovely young vampires to inflate patrons, Lilith—truly the Madam from Hell—sets up shop at the heart of the Bible Belt, turning on her red light in a hideaway conveniently located beneath the McCutcheon Mortuary. A coded password (ask for “the Cunningham Wake”) and an E-ticket coffin ride through the funeral home's crematorium bring clients into her parlor, where girls in various stages of despicable overtake the clientele. For the girls, however, it's a one-way trip to a one-night stand—there are no repeat customers. Lilith's ladies set up the guys, then she comes in to



Lilith, played by supermodel Angel Everhart (left), finds that Rafe Guttman (*Demon Knight*) is just her (Blood) type.

finish them off in a manner that gives “deep kissing” a whole new dimension.

A Missing Brother/ A Rock 'n' Roll Preacher

One of Lilith's patrons is a young punk named Caleb (*Curry Stew* by Mr. Feldman) into heavy metal, black leather, and body piercing. Caleb visits Lilith's brothel in the company of his friends and fellow sociopaths,



Hunting vampires is probably easier than making a movie about it."

—Burbank costumer A. J. Katz

going AWOL from the "normal" suburban home he shares with his sister, Katherine Blood, comely, and virginal, Katherine Verdoux (Erika Hurnak—late of *Reptile*) and the second-generation Ely, Mac in the movie version of *The Beverly Hills Cop*) as as

straight-arrow as her brother is twisted. She is a devout follower of rock 'n' roll televangelist Reverend Jeremy Current (Chris Sarandon, *Fright Night*, *Club's Play*). Current breakfasts from a high-tech Crystal Cathedral, outfitted with laser beams, a

Movie-making is a collaborative medium. The marbling of *Lilith* at the film's finale involves a small army of camera and sound operators, plus special effects personnel who manipulate various parts of her increasingly repulsive anatomy.

Proprietors (far left) operate the Lilith "doll" by remote control. For some scenes, Angie Everhart was in Makeup for up to six hours as technicians layered on Lilith's latex appliances (near left and below). Some sequences utilized Everhart's "better half" (lower left), but make-up and prosthetics effects coordinator Chris Nelson designed a gaging 28-inch one wound as a customized necessary for her purple gown. (He also made twenty-five sets of fangs.)



BORDELLO OF BLOOD

Credits

Starring

Dennis Miller
Ellen Barkin
Angie Everhart
Chris Sarandon
Cory Feldman

and

John Casar
as the voice of the
Cryd Monster

Executive Producers

Richard Donner
David Geis
Walter Hill
Joel Silver
Robert Zemeckis

Story by

Bob Gale &
Robert Zemeckis

Screenplay by

A. L. Kato & Gilbert Adler

Produced and

Directed by
Gilbert Adler

Director of Photography

Tom Johnson

Production Designer

Greg Miller

File Editor

Stephen Lovelock, AOB

Executive Music Producer

Michael Kamen

Songs Composed by

Chas. Dornheim

Coproducers

Alan Rata
Alexander Callott

Visual Effects by

Available Light Ltd.

Additional Credits

ES:cos Designed
& Created by
Todd Masters Company

Shot on location in Vancouver, the *Tales* production team created a deliberately over-the-top set at the U.C. Pavilion, located downtown at the site of EXPO '86. On the site of Rowland Jimmy Carson's Crystal Cathedral-type sanctuary, they constructed a 28-foot neonated cross, which split down the middle to accommodate a rising 12-foot mechanical droid.



small system worthy of the *Thomas Jefferson*, and an animatronic devil that he summons (and vanquishes) on one Katherine seeks for the answer as an all-purpose administrative assistant-cum-solving-tyrannical-problems. Turns out, however, that the Reverend Current—in JC, as he is known to his disciples—has another employee—a wealthy widget named Vincent.

An Insolvent Gumshoe

Frustrated because the police won't look for her brother, Katherine hires down-and-out detective Rafe Gutman (Dennis Miller, *Brooklyn, The Net, and of course, Dennis Miller Live*). Rafe gets a hot tip on where to find some hot action, learns that Caleb was last seen headed for a warehouse, and pays a call on the McCutcheon Mortuary.

A Pact with the Devil

Knowing her brother went to the whorehouse but not his ultimate fate, Katherine's close brush with Sodom and Gomorrah prompts her to ask Current for permission to make a fundamentalist documentary about the evils of lust: "Ordward Christian soldiers," he says, blessing her usually,—for Current and his flock, the fight with Satan is a daily struggle. His next opportunity is with another true believer—"Brother" Vincent the deacon.

The Reverend Current, it seems, sponsored Vincent's quest for Lalah's heart and her resurrection—all in the name of the Lord. Jimmy believed that Lalah and her harem would rid the world of adulterers, one fornicator at a time, but now, her whereabouts has taken on a life of its own. Vincent,

"These guys want to scare the pants off you and then make you laugh."

—Dennis Miller



Denied entry to the Cunningham Wake, Rafe corners a little breakfast and cringing and finds a piece of Lalah's nose jewelry in the embalming room.

Just Her Type

When Rafe finally takes his own coffin ride into the brothel, he meets up with Tamara, Lalah's newest recruit. Tamara is into B&B, or as he calls it, "medieval foreplay." Only by snoring the tables, as it were, on Tamara does Rafe manage to escape from the torture devices in the brothel's dungeon room. In making his getaway, however, he leaves his wallet behind. Tamara still has a lot of Rafe's blood on her fingers, and Lalah decides he's just her type—blood type, that is. In her own way, she considers Rafe a delicacy. "I haven't tasted this since from the 'In' table," she says with gusto as she sucks on Tamara's digits, "and that was eight centuries ago. We gotta keep this guy alive!"

For his part, it turns out that he should be getting more personal financial reward from the headsets and is bent on making his own deal with Lalah to impact the operation.

In disguise, Current trails Vincent to his rendezvous with Lalah at a sleazy strip joint, only to be interrupted by Katherine's documentary filmmaker Current, Vincent, and Lalah (lighted a cut the back door, but not before Katherine has filmed an interview with the Vampire for her documentary. In the showdown in the back alley, Vincent shambles Current and throws it with Lalah. In the ensuing fight, the ancient key is shattered.

The Truth Is Transparent

Katherine studies her videotape back to the studio. She recognizes Reverend Current, despite his disguise, but is even more amazed to find that her footage shows her pointing her microphone at an empty

During ministry broadcasts, the devil uses so that Rev. Current can sympathize him, but with the preacher out of the picture and Lalah on the loose, the fate of the world rests in the hands of Katherine Verdoux (Erika Ehmke, above right) and detective Rafe Gutman (Miller).

air. There is no image of Lilitz on film. While she is showing her footage to Rafe, she gets a panic-by phone call from Caleb, asking to meet them in an abandoned power plant.

When they find him, Caleb is alive—or rather, undead. Rafe is knocked unconscious as he and Katherine attempt to get away. When he comes to, Katherine is nowhere to be found, and he's strapped to a hospital bed, trying to explain how vampire prophecies are taking over the city to an incredulous cop. A nurse enters, asks the officer's help with the patient in the other bed, then snaks her fangs into his neck—it's Rafe's old nemesis, Tamara. Defending himself with garb, salad dressing, Gortman and Tamara scuffle, disturbing the patient in the other bed—none other than Whoopi Goldberg. Tamara is done in, not by Rafe, but by a shaft of sunlight. Although she is wearing sunblock to protect herself, the light has her skin through a tear in her uniform and she vaporizes.

The Water of Life and Death

Rafe flees the hospital and heads for the funeral home. Using his car as a battering ram, he crashes through the mortuary wall, armed with his pistol and—a neon Super Soaker. There he finds the Reverend Current. Outfitted with spikes, a hammer, and a knife, the preacher has come to try to undo the havoc he has wrought. Realizing that Current is soft on the side of the angels, Rafe tosses him a water pistol.

Both the pistol and the Super Soaker are filled with holy water, deadly for the vampire ruffians, but useless against Lilitz herself. "The only way to kill her," says Current, "is to draw and quarter her heart." Current and Gortman drench the whorls in a soggy shenanigan. Hookers melt, suicide, rape, and explode as the brothel is destroyed. The two rescue Katherine, then take on Lilitz. Rafe takes a Lance Borden whack at her with an axe. Down but not out, she retreats to regroup, but not before she mortally wounds Jimmy. With his dying breath, Current tells Katherine to broadcast the word from the cathedral.



Joel Silver's other commitments precluded his involvement in *Schedule of Blood* on a daily basis, but he still worked closely with Gil Adler's production team. "I put in my two cents," he says.

"I'm very proud of the fact that we were able to take this *Tales from the Crypt* idea and build it into something that is really like a cottage industry."

—Joel Silver

The Vampire Gospels

With Rafe manning the camera, Katherine stands on the altar/stage, preparing to corrupt with JC's last wish. As she does so, however, the Devil figure rises from beneath the platform, splintering the cross. Lilitz, it seems, has taken over the control room, generating special effects all her own. She handcuffs Rafe to a railing, then goes for Katherine. In the ensuing catfight, Katherine is definitely getting the worst of it until Rafe gets to the lower control panel with his foot. Stretching himself to the limit, he painstakingly manipulates the lever with his toe until he finally succeeds in using its beam to separate

Lilitz's auricles and ventricles into their four component parts. Morphing rapidly into a hulkish monster, Lilitz comes after him, but disintegrates before she can wreak her revenge.

Sex and Sunblock

With the aid of a robot, Rafe and Katherine incorporate the last of Lilitz in the McCauley Mortuary crematorium. As they leave the mortuary with Lilitz's ashes in a little wooden reliquary, all of

Katherine's satisfactions, discontent has vanished. Now playful and more than a little horny, it looks as though the smoldering attraction between Rafe and Katherine might finally burst into flame.

However, when Rafe comments on her perfume, she tells him it's sunblock—just before she snaks her fangs into his neck.

That's a wrap!



A Kinder, Gentler Keeper

For two years, *Tales from the Cryptkeeper*, the kiddie version of *Tales from the Crypt* from Nelvana Productions, haunted ABC's Saturday morning cartoon lineup. Executive producer Toper Taylor saw the *Crypt Keeper* as an ideal candidate to replace the *Beetlejuice* series. As he told *Figaro's* Anthony Ferrante, "We saw there was a need for another horror-type property. Those [have] always worked, as far back as *Scooby-Doo*, but ABC was clearly not ready for E! horror on Saturday morning. We're a lot more cautious with regard to bloodshed and the acts of violence underneath it all."

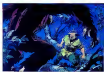
Nelvana retained child psychologist Brian Newmark to review the scripts and make sure they were suitable for the target audience. They had originally considered using Kevin Yagher's *Keeper* as the host, but they eventually decided that the puppet was a bit too "yo" for very small children, and went with a cartoon likeness instead. To further take the edge off him, they gave him some long-dormant but nevertheless familiar sidekicks—the Vault Keeper and the Old Witch—who traded wisecracks with him and bantered with one another over who was going to take control of the show.

John Kassir is the voice for the animated *Crypt Keeper*, as he is for the nighttime edition, but he found that adapting to a G-rated version of the character took some adjustment. "Nelvana created a kinder, gentler personality for the children's *Crypt Keeper*, and it took a little uncharacteristic at times," he admits. Although the cartoon series only ran for two seasons, it spawned an astonishingly diverse collection of *Crypt* merchandise and memorabilia.

SECRETS
OF THE
CRYPT KEEPER'S
HAUNTED HOUSE



With the *Crypt Keeper* as "you-leader," *Secrets of the Crypt Keeper's Haunted House* is a new TV game show in which young contestants face challenges such as The Incredible Shrinking Room and The Swamp from Hell—environments enhanced by computer-generated virtual reality and Hollywood FX technology.



The *Tales from the Cryptkeeper* cartoon series had its share of spooky images, but each episode was a morality play for children portraying the consequences of unprincipled behavior.

Buying Up the Past

A "collectible" is anything that people collect, whether or not that item had any intrinsic market value when it was first produced. Captain Midnight decoder rings are a great example. So are baseball cards and political campaign buttons. So are *Avengers on Parade*, Max Gaines' original 1933 giveaway comic books that were offered as inducements for purchasing Whomps and Gamels Day.

Everything about the 1933 New York World's Fair is collectible—as is anything about *The Wizard of Oz*. "If they'd made a *Wizard of Oz* comic book in '33 when the Judy Garland movie came out, it would qualify," says Jerry Weiss, comic collector/collector consultant for Sethe's, only hall in print.

Generally speaking, the hottest collectibles, like those from the World's Fair and *The Wizard of Oz*, are associated with cultural phenomena—even that

- became shared experiences that bonded us together.
- allowed us to see the world differently, or
- aroused comments.

YESTERDAY'S MEMORIES... TOMORROW'S TREASURES

Tales from the Crypt bonded kids together.

It set a new standard for horror, art and storyline and changed the way readers thought about horror comics. And it was an ash in controversy. As a home life cultural phenomenon on all three grounds, virtually anything associated with

Tales from the Crypt, in either its early or later years, is collectible.



All EC comics from the 1950s are collectible, but first issues and special editions such as these are particularly valuable. Copies that don't look their age are the most prized by collectors.

10¢

EC comic books cost just a dime when first published, now they can fetch hundreds of dollars. Generally they are worth ten to 20 times more than other comic books of their time, even those that originally outsold them on the newsstand.

Much of this financial performance is in effect a "banned books" bonus. In fact, Weinbaum is just one of a long line of unsuccessful

Newsday broke and unable to market *Shock* #3, Bill Gaines ordered almost the entire print run of 250,000 destroyed. Less than 200 copies were hand-sold, making the issue the "Bludge Diamond" of EC comics.

grandams of morality throughout history, a skin of shrewdly selected individuals that exuded from the Renaissance pious who tried to exterminate the "hepnotic" works of Dostoev, to the purveyors of the 1960s who asked dealers to just to mention them (and damage) in a banishment effort to discourage the sale of their "books in *Tales from the Crypt*," to those who would not put big leaves over the works of Robert Mapplethorpe. Although government also gave notice of censors have been surprised at the autonomy over the centuries these efforts to bowdlerize works of art, music, and literature have almost uniformly produced the same result. If, incidentally, the censors' efforts made the subjects of their wrath more precious, the polar opposite of what they'd intended.

Both Weinbaum's who supervised an early copy of *Tales from the Crypt*, whether they did so with a clear conscience toward eventual financial gain or merely out of a packman's malice, find that their comic book deals have realized increases in value that exceed all but the most bullish stocks on the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

Today a pristine copy of an early *Tales from the Crypt* is worth \$1,500, a 15,000% return on a 10¢ investment.

Even those who started collecting in the 1960s or 1970s and paid prices that seemed as the more like class gangery — \$2 for a 10¢ comic — find that their investment has handsomely outperformed the market.

The *Diamond* Guide, a price catalogue published by first-generation EC fan-club Bob Owsen, monitors the pulse of the comic book market, from the hot comics of the 1940s through the more contemporary Owsen's works with a network of dealers across the country who furnish data to him about prices and trends; his guide is the comic equivalent of the automobile *Blue Book*. Year after year, *Tales from the Crypt* and the other EC *New Talent* comics are among those reported to be the most valuable, provided they are in excellent condition.



Fans almost always begin by amassing comic books, but serious collectors often move on to purchase the original pen-and-ink artwork. Original comic art, such as this Johnny Clegg cover created by just-published Grant Gerstein, is the hottest segment of the collectibles market.

*Cover page might not find the "bludge" term because they did not exist. According to Peter M. Holt, author of *Tales from the Crypt*, they were a term he invented to describe the situation.

The Ravages of Time

Comic books don't age well, and keeping them in nice condition is a problem that only increases with time. Like picnic postcards, and movie posters, comic books are "ephemera"—a fancy name for stuff that was never meant to last. From the flimsy first genre staple that holds them together to the cheap, highly acidic newspaper, comic books were designed to be read a few times and tossed away. Because

it is inevitable. It is the air itself—exposure to heat, humidity, sunlight, and smog cause irreversible damage. To keep the paper from yellowing and turning either moldy or brittle, collectors store their comics in archival envelopes. Serious collectors handle their comics as if they were radioactive, using the same gloves worn by film editors. Nevertheless, repeated contact inevitably diminishes the value.

Games began selling mint-condition EC file copies in 1998. Each one came with a pair of film editor's gloves, and a Certificate of Authenticity.

these moments of the past are so vulnerable, the highest prices are garnered by comics that are in "mint" or "near mint" condition—meaning they've never or almost never been read.

When film comics were new in the fifties, the main enemies of preservation were all too visible. They were handled—compulsively tidy moms resting on "junk" and little brothers aimed with crayons and pencil liners. Today, the enemy is far more insidious because



Games, Fred von Borries (center), and Ted E. White (right) are shown in December 1955 poring over bound volumes of EC comics. Von Borries is in the computer of the Complete EC Chronicle, which indexed all EC New World comics, and is a valuable resource for collectors.

they were brand new—those who saw them said they smelled of fresh milk. Not surprisingly, they brought three to four times the value indicated in the *Cherishest Price Guide*.

There are other high-grade collections of EC comics, most notably what has become known as the "White Mountain Collection," accrued by a man from the granite hills of New Hampshire whose car dealer father had been a scammer of vintage automobiles. Inspired by the rigorous standard of his father's collection, he bought out of almost every EC and stockpiled them meticulously in metal file cabinets, where they were insulated from fluctuations in heat and humidity. Presume comics such as the EC file copies and the White Mountain Collection redefined the meaning of "mint" in the collectibles world. New sources do surface from time to time. It's possible that the mother lode of mint EC comics remains entombed with the 40-year-old *Wolverine* as some decommissioned fallout shelter in Winchester, Nevada—or anywhere in the high desert where the air is dry and cold.

Tales from the File

Bill Games was a saver—he was sentimental about his comic creations and felt a personal attachment both to the works and to the people who produced them. He also knew or at least suspected that his *New World* comics had the potential to appreciate in value. Among the items he saved for posterity were a dozen file copies of each EC comic book. Four were kept for family members—his children Gail, Wendy, and Mike, and his wife Anne. Beginning in 1990 the remaining copies were sold, some individually, some in complete sets, together with untraded certificates of authenticity—and a pair of film editor's gloves. Because they had been carefully stored, they had not significantly yellowed. It was as if

they were brand new—those who saw them said they smelled of fresh milk. Not surprisingly, they brought three to four times the value indicated in the *Cherishest Price Guide*.

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Grant Geissman: The Ultimate Collector

Grant Geissman is an accomplished jazz musician who leads a double life as one of the foremost collectors of EC and MAD materials in the world.

"I'm considered what's called a second-generation fan, and I got into it when I discovered MAD when I was about eight years old. It was this whole window on the adult world—I was astounded that such a publication could exist and you could ride your bike down to the drugstore and pick it up. When the Ian Ballantine EC reprints showed up at the bookstore in 1984, I bought them and recognized Wally Wood and Joe Delande and all the MAD guys. From then on, I was hooked. I hung on to my Ballantine EC books, and I read 'em to death. When I found out that you could actually go back and buy the original comics, I started doing that as well. I began getting in touch with collectors and dealers. "When I began collecting, I could still buy all the original comics for a few dollars. In 1987 I was going to send \$3 to a dealer to buy MAD #20, but my dad urged me to save my money for a few weeks so that I could buy MAD #1. I'm glad he did. It was a thrill to own it—as well as a bargain."

"I've actually had several collections over the years, but I've sold pieces when I wanted to buy other things. Recently, I sold a number of comics to purchase original paintings from Al Feldstein and Johnny Craig. I'm one of the few people who has tried to collect all the comic books, all the related paraphernalia, and some of the good paintings, too. For example, I have a pair of the EC cufflinks that Gaines had made for his staff, and a charm from the EC charm bracelet that Bal gave to the ladies. Stuff like that is what pushes my buttons. It's just more personal than the comic books."

Geissman toured with Chuck Mangione and played guitar on the album *Feels So Good*. His tenth and most recent solo album is *Business As Usual*. In addition, he is the author of *Collectibly MAD*.

"I was a guitar player early in life. I practiced diligently but my comic book collection was always a little closet hobby that I had. My mother always said, 'Why are you wasting your time with the crap? It'll never amount to anything!' My real life was playing in bands, but I never throw the stuff away. It was always there. Now I have my own house and this, well, shrine."

Collectors of original art frames in for display (below); many also possess specialty artwork. A 1972 limited edition print of the cover art from *World Science-Fantasy* #29 was hand-colored and signed by artist Frank Frazetta, and marketed by Ross Collins.



Subject Grant Geissman, author of *Collectibly MAD* (Kluwer Ink Press), poses in his home museum with his collection of EC memorabilia.



The Cult of Personality

The Crypt Keeper is a bawdy tale wag, and at least as many people tune in to revel in his gruly, campy humor as to see the episodes themselves. The persona of the Crypt Keeper is the medium by which fans from the Crypt fans identify with the TV show and the films. "The whole zeitgeist of the horror phenomenon hangs on the Crypt Keeper, this uncracking Groucho Marx-y kind of character," says collector/musician Grant Gersmum, "and for some reason that grabs people. We've always been fascinated with scary stuff—it's a way to measure reality against fiction. I think it's connected to the urban myths described by Jim Harold Bruusard. These are widely held beliefs, stories that everyone thinks are true, like the choking Baberman who has fingers in his throat, the couple retreating on lovers' lane who hear radio bulletins warning of a one-armed murderer and later find a prosthetic hook dangling from the handle of their car door.... Some of what goes on in the TV series is a little over the top—deliberately so. What they've done is take the EC stuff to the next level. They're thrilling and outrageous for today, just like EC was thrilling and outrageous for the '50s. It's just been turned up ten notches because it's the '80s—and the Crypt Keeper ties it all together."



Some collectors seek out new works with the first generation keeper, such as Al Feldman's "The Original EC Crypt Keeper & Friends" (above). Others prefer the "Tribute" 1990s Crypt Keeper replicas (below) from Spencer Gifts. (Naked lady not included.)

Future Antiques

Jack Wold, president of *Tales from the Crypt Productions*, is the marketing mastermind behind the growing array of contemporary Crypt Keeper collectibles, and is personally involved in their creative development. He also reproduced *Secrets of the Crypt Keeper's Haunted House*, a new action/adventure game show which debuted this fall on CBS. There are Crypt T-shirts, a "museum-quality" scale-model Crypt Keeper kit from Serenim Products, and "Have You Seen a Scary Little Christmas," a Crypt-Keeper-as-Bing-Crosby album of Ghoulade favorites. Backed by the Salvaging Army Band and the Santa Clarita All Ghoul Chorus, the Keeper crosses such old favorites as

"Deck the Halls with Parts of Charlie." The CD also includes a reprint of "... And All Through the House," the classic Jimmy Craig *Host of Horror* story (and HBO series premise) about the murderess whose young daughter admits a horrid murder into the house because he's dressed as St. Nick. There's a trio of Ghoulade-style cold-war porcelain statues by William Stout. There are *Tales from the Crypt* trading cards with scenes from the TV series, and a *Tales from the Crypt* phone card for making toll calls *away* from home. There's even a *Tales from the Crypt* pinball machine.

The softer *Tales from the Crypt* cartoon series, targeted at younger viewers, has also generated a host of spin-off products.

Marketing of these items peaks in the fall to coincide with Halloween, a holiday that has been growing rapidly in commercial importance. Novelty items include *Cryptkeeper* Halloween masks and costumes, cylinders of Halloween candy topped with *Cryptkeeper* finger puppets, and a Barbie-size *Cryptkeeper* doll that cackles just like John Kassia. Some of the goods are conventional costume and magic store fare, such as hyperthematic Googley Eyes (reminiscent of Marty Feldman's—or the Goddard Minister's—except they glow in the dark), Ghoul Guts, and Cadaver Patty that very much resembles its generic cousin, Silly Putty. What makes them collectible is that they have been packaged with the kinder, gentler *Cryptkeeper* of the Nelvana cartoon series on the label.

Are Ghoul Guts and Cadaver Patty the anchors of tomorrow's collection of *Tales from the Crypt* treasures? It's possible, says Jerry West of Satchel's Survivorship is important—the rarer an item is, the more value it has—even if it was made in the millions and only a few remain. "As long as you have a mother or female who throws it out—or a Religious Right that burns it—there's going to be a market for it twenty-five years later," he adds with a chuckle.



COLLECTIBLES FROM THE CRYPT





on the cover

Crypt Keeper Bust

Hollywood artist/designer Greg Aronowitz has sculpted a nine-inch cold-cast porcelain bust of the Crypt Keeper as part of his "Legends in Three Dimensions" series.

Crypt Keeper Mask and Hands

Collegville/Imagining manufactures a Crypt Keeper mask and hands as the basic components of a Halloween dress-up costume.



The Ghoulies in Porcelain

Graphix Designs has produced a limited edition set of cold-cast porcelain statues of the EC comic version of the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper, and the Old Witch, sculpted by William Stout.



EC Charm, Cufflinks

Bill Gaines had about two dozen sets of gold-plated EC cufflinks (left) made for the men on his staff in the early 1960s. Women received larger EC charms (right). These very rare items are highly prized by collectors.

Crypt Keeper Collectibles

The Crypt Keeper "franchise" has generated a host of collectible items for fans of the television series and of the two feature films. Shown below are Crypt Keeper trading cards, audio-CDs, novelizations of the movies, and a 13-video series, each containing three episodes of the TV show.



Tales from the Crypt T-Shirts

Tales T-shirts, with or without the image of the Crypt Keeper, are popular with younger collectors. Some were given away as prizes in a Tales from the Crypt pinball game trivia contest.



Juvenile Cryptkeeper Merchandise

Nelson's Tales from the Cryptkeeper cartoon series generated a multitude of collectible novelty items of special interest to kids.



Cryptkeeper goodies for kids include Tales from the Crypt candy, Googley Eyes, Cadaver Putty, wrist watch, and horror action figures. Not all novelty items use the cartoon Cryptkeeper image. Some, such as the do-it-yourself Cryptkeeper model kit (far left) and Cryptkeeper dolls (below) are based on the contemporary "adult" Crypt Keeper.



Ballantine EC reprints, GhouLmatic bookends

The black-and-white Ballantine EC reprints of the mid-1960s rekindled interest in EC comics, and have themselves become collectible. So are the GhouLmatic bookends.



This Bud's for You

In 1993, the Crystal Keeper was a spokesman for Anheuser-Busch breweries, a role that spawned a collection of commercial souvenirs.



Pinball Machine

The colorfully animated, obstinately designed pinball machine from Data East of Chicago was never sold to individuals. Marketed to commercial establishments as an arcade game for \$2,000 apiece, the pinball machines sold out quickly and has not been available for several years. This is one of the rarest and most costly of the EC collectibles.



A Worldwide Boom in Tales Memorabilia

There are thousands upon thousands of people seriously collecting comic books," says West. "It's a global phenomenon. Sotheby's last auction had over 750 people in the floor, but the real auction was the 1980 to 2000 online absentee bidders who were bidding long distance from places like Scotland, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Tokyo, Seoul, Sydney, and Toronto."

"Rank issues of *Tales from the Crypt* are the highest in demand," continues West. "Higher than *Wired Science*, higher even than *MAD*. People love the title above all others. *Tales from the Crypt* has more of a dramatic ring to it than *Walt of Walt* or *Demot of Demot*, and of course the *Crypt* keeper has always been a more popular figure—he's the #1 comic book character of that whole era, the Superman of his time."

By far the hottest segment of the collectables market, however, is original comic art. When Bill Gaines began releasing the EC original illustration boards for sale at auction, numerous collectors of comic books segued into collecting art. The auctions, first through Ross Cowman and later through Sotheby's, brought record prices and spirited bidding. Many of those who have collected comics for any length of time know one another at least by name or reputation. Bidders reveal one another (but intensely) with one another for the cheapest lots, some of which have realized astonishing increases in value in a very short time. "A *Tales from the Crypt* Feldheim cover, like #24, which ten years ago sold in Rowe's auction for \$1,400 and five years ago would have been worth \$2,700, was valued at \$4,000 two years ago. You couldn't get it now for \$15,000," declares Jerry West. "Overstreet's comic book price guide has been raising one year in a quarter of a century, but now there's an Overstreet's for collecting original comic artwork. The blossoming of the market for originals occurred for any number of reasons, the foremost of which is the mystique and magic behind the fact that there's only one of what you've got."

Like Barbies in their original boxes, every lot in place, or brief redily bears that will have their EAC Schwab price tags, there is something generic and more than a

little, and about a perfect comic book that's never given a kid a thrill. The passion for accumulate copies of old comics—and the prices people are willing to pay for them—baffles some of those most intimately involved in creating them. "Nicknames of old comic books are paying \$200 to \$250 for a forty ten-cent magazine!" marvels *Tales* collector Al Feldheim. "Bill Gaines went

to the comic book conventions, but now I go because it's really an eye trip. I see these dealer displays and they've got a *Tales from the Crypt* Number 22 or 25 with my artwork on it and there's a price of \$475 on it. I didn't get \$475 to do the original artwork and the eight-page lead story together!" It's funny. I say to a dealer, 'Would you like me to sign that?' After he reaches into his pocket, like a tennis ball, because he's turning it over and over in his hand, wonder-



The *Crypt* Keeper even has his own place in cyberspace. At the *Tales from the Crypt* website, <http://www.cryptcomics.com>, one can surf on pull down sales and author clips, and look at original screenplays. The website will also be selling *Crypt* merchandise.



would make his copy more valuable because it's one or less valuable because his copy would no longer be yours."

It's an agonizing question that sparks controversy among condition-conscious collectors, a notoriously penny-pincher lot. A first edition of *Devils* signed by Brian Basko is worth more than an unsigned copy, but *Devils* is not a comic book. Although some would say that Feldheim's John Hancock adds value to a vintage comic, Jerry West of Sotheby's maintains that, "Generally, any autograph in the cover of a comic book sends the value down because basically comic book people are anal fanatics. If an issue of *Comics* Number 1 (Superman's debut) were signed by (Superman creator) Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, it would be worth less." In other words, more is more—as if it had been one of the passes, even before it had been placed on the newswatch when it might have been—hampered. (Many of the finest surviving EC comics originally belonged to subscribers, whose passes arrived by mail and were never subjected to the prying and musings of the newswatch.)



They don't call me a keeper for nothing. Heh, heh, heh.



Bill Gaines

An Appreciation

When Bill Gaines passed away in 1992, his place in the history of American popular culture was already secure. Most people knew him primarily as the godfather of MAD magazine, but with the ongoing success of *Tales from the Crypt* on TV, many more fans have come to appreciate how broad his vision really was. Not only did he work intensely with Al Feldstein to develop EC's horror and science-fiction story lines, he also served as the creator and sustainer of EC's atmosphere of halldouse looniness — a benevolent bedlam that fostered some of the finest comic artwork ever produced in the United States.

"EC was an amazingly happy group of very creative people. There was genuine caring and affection," remembers Nancy Gaines fondly.

"I used to sit in the office opening mail while Bill and Al plotted out the stories. It was such fun to be there."

Nancy, who came to work in EC's subscription department at the age of seventeen, named Bill in November of 1956, just as the EC empire was crumbling. "On the plane returning from our honeymoon he said, 'I didn't want to tell you this before we left, but we're bankrupt.' It didn't bother me, because I knew Bill could do anything."

Bill and Nancy were married for fifteen years and had three children, Cathy, Wendy, and Mike, all of whom were born after the heady days of the horror comics. Even after EC's demise, however, Gaines' offbeat creativity and macabre sense of fun didn't leave him when he went home from the office. "We went to zappala shows (Bill was an avid collector. He took us on picnics in graveyards. He was a wonderful father!" says Cathy Gaines. Miked enthusiastically. "He always had fun things for us to do — not normal things. He and I spent one summer going to every French restaurant in New York City.

No matter where we went, he taught you something. He put a clever twist on it, something cute or funny, to make you want to learn and remember. I hear myself doing the same thing with my own children."

Mike Gaines runs his own business and keeps watch over the memorabilia in the family vault. By Bill's arrangement, Wendy Gaines Bucco became the guardian of the EC legacy after her father's death. With the help of

Gaines' longstanding advisors, Jack Albert and Dorothy Crouch, she makes sure that contemporary uses of EC images and materials are in keeping with the intent of the originals. Her responsibility has given Wendy an enhanced appreciation for her father and his work.

"It all makes sense now. When I was younger, EC didn't really mean anything to me, but I've come to have an enormous respect for the material."

Wendy Bucco also admires the artwork. "I understand about Feldstein, Daves, Craig, Kamen and the others, and the impact they had on the world."

Bill himself was also aware of their impact, both on the world at large and on his own world, and acknowledged it throughout his lifetime. Although he owned the EC artwork outright, when Russ Cochran a reprint began generating money and when the sales of the original illustration boards began, Gaines sent royalty payments to his former artists. Bill even tracked down the reclusive Graham Ingels, who had repudiated his association with horror, and convinced him to take the money, if only to donate it to charity. Payments to surviving artists have continued since his death.

"The public may remember Bill best for MAD, but *Tales from the Crypt* and the other horror comics always had a very special place in his heart — as did the people who made them," says Anne Gaines, who first met Bill in 1972. They were married in 1987.

"He loved the material, and he loved the fact that there were all these loyal fans who wouldn't let it be forgotten."

He was so pleased when it became a successful TV series. "It was a great vindication."

After seeing his horror comics reviled as instigators of juvenile delinquency, Bill Gaines lived long enough to see them become sought-after collectibles. He also made the deal that brought them to life on television, reaching a new level of popularity with a whole new generation of fans. "After my father died," recalls Wendy Bucco, "someone had drawn a cartoon of Dad standing in heaven with his new wings on, facing his Maker. He was saying, 'God, put me in Fredric Wertham's section.' It would be the final justice, EC style."

A FINAL GIFT FROM THE CRYPT

In the waning days of December 1995, Sotheby's consultant Jerry Weist and his lifelong friend and fellow fan-saddler, Roger Hill, made their annual pilgrimage to West Plains to visit with Russ Cochran. Weist was there on a busman's holiday to select some artwork for a forthcoming Sotheby's auction.

On New Year's Day, 1996, Weist opened a drawer in one of the tall antique wooden filing cabinets in Cochran's recycled bank vault, unfolded the butcher-paper wrappings on one of packages, and was bewildered. "It wasn't anything I recognized," says

Weist, "but the light was

very bad. I carried the package out to show Russ and Roger, but they didn't recognize it either. Then I

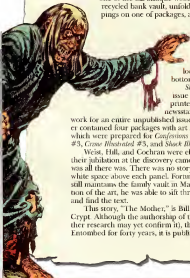
looked at the markings on the bottom. It said *Shock Illustrated #4*."

Shock Illustrated #3 was the last issue of *Picto-Fiction* that was ever printed, but it never made it to the newsstands. Weist had found the

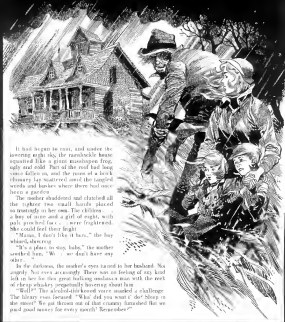
work for an entire unpublished issue of *Picto-Fiction*. The file drawer contained four packages with art for nineteen complete stories, which were prepared for *Confessions Illustrated #3*, *Terror Illustrated #3*, *Cross Illustrated #3*, and *Shock Illustrated #4*.

Weist, Hill, and Cochran were elated, but fast on the heels of their jubilation at the discovery came the realization that artwork was all there was. There was no story on the illustration board, just white space above each panel. Fortunately, Mike Gaines, Bill's son, still maintains the family vault in Manhattan. Armed with a description of the art, he was able to sift through the family mementos and find the text.

This story, "The Mother," is Bill Gaines' last gift from the Crypt. Although the authorship of the story is still uncertain (further research may yet confirm it), the artwork is by Jack Davis. Entombed for forty years, it is published here for the first time.



THE MOTHER



It had begun to rain, and under the lowering night sky, the ramshackle house squatted like a giant misshapen frog, ugly and cold. Part of the roof had long since fallen in, and the ruins of a leaky chimney lay scattered amid the tangled weeds and bushes where there had once been a garden.

The mother shuddered and clatched all the tighter two small heads placed so trustingly in her own. The children . . . a boy of nine and a girl of eight, with pale, pinched faces . . . were frightened. She could feel their fright.

"Mama, I don't like it here," the boy whined, shivering.

"It's a place to stay, baby," the mother soothed him. "We . . . we don't have any other . . ."

In the darkness, the mother's eyes turned to her husband. Not angry. Not even accusingly. There was no feeling of any kind left in her for this great hulking, unclean man with the reek of cheap whiskey perpetually hovering about him.

"Well?" The alcohol-soaked words were issued a challenge. The literary man leered. "What did you want 'em' sleep in the snow? We got them out of that creamy darkness that we paid good money for every month! Remember?"

"We wouldn't have been put out if we'd paid every month Frank!" The mother was patient, formal, unreasonably, forever patient.

The father, however, was not. He swung at her suddenly, snapping...

She's fingers left a harsh imprint on her cheek.



"Meaning I'm a liar, eh?" And the lecherous face was shoved close to her own. "Meaning I used my dough for booze 'stead of paying the rent, eh? Okay! So what? I found this place, didn't I? I'm taking care of my family, ain't I? So don't you give me one of your tin, y'hear? Nobody gives Frank Krebs one bit! Nobody."



The word trailed off. "C'mon. Here's look inside. Nobody's been near this dump for years."

The mother followed, holding tightly to the cold trembling little hand.

There was no door. Just a black, yawning cavity. Rocks struck a match. And instantly there was a rousing, a skittering, a scratching.

"That?"

They were everywhere. Tiny red eyes gleamed in dark corners. Shady grey heads a-leeching glimmering eyeballs. Battering legs on rotting wood.



Upstairs, there were two dark rooms. In one, was a bed, broken, sagging, covered with a mildewed rug of blanket. . . . but still, a bed. Krebs fell on it, and he was asleep almost at once.

The mother took the children into the other room. For them, there was a messy pile of soddy bags. She stayed with them until they had fallen asleep.



But he saw it in the morning. Sun it and hurled a broken chair after it as it dove through a hole in the wall.

The chair smashed against the already-cracked plaster, gouging a great chunk of the rotten stuff loose, and sending a hollow reverberation echoing through the abandoned old house.



Krebs was feeling mean, the way he always did after a drink. When the children, awakened by the noise, ran in, frightened and crying, he heaved himself up from the filthy bed and started after them, scolding.

"Shut up! Whining! Howling! Haunting me like."

But the mother was home by then. She appeared suddenly, got in Krebs's way, stood between him and her children.

"Get out of my way!" he snarled.

"No, Rudolf!" The mother was rock.



"I'll take care of them," she said as she turned away. "Now come downstairs. There's an old stove. I bought some groceries and got a fire going. You'd better have something to eat."

But Krebs did not eat. Sometimes, when he was sober, he was almost afraid of his wife. She was so . . . so . . . Blast her! And those feet of hers and . . .

Her cheap pocketbook was on the bed. He rifled through it, found a dollar and some silver in it.



"Just wait till your mother is gone," he told them slyly. But it was the mother who came understanding.

"I told you," she said. "You're not going to touch them. You'll have to kill me first."

It happened so suddenly. The rage came like fire. Krebs's feet awoke in a short jolting arc, and the mother was flung backward.



Her head slammed against the foot of the bed, and she sank to the floor. Blood seeped slowly into the quilted褥垫.

And behind Krebs there was a scratching. The rat had come out of its hole and was sat on its haunches, watching him.

Suddenly, Krebs was sober. Suddenly he was on his knees beside his wife, shaking her, screaming at her.

"Get up, get up, get up."



Only she would never get up. Because the mother was dead. He'd killed her. He sat there stupidly beside her in an alcoholic daze. And the rat watched.

Until Krebs stumbled to his feet, and kicked at it crazily, and it dove twittering back into its hole.



Krebs stayed in his room all that day. It was not until night, and the children had cried themselves to sleep upon their bed of rags, that he left the old house. There was a lumber yard he knew.

When he staggered back, he was carrying a under-kammit-pouled sack of built-in plaster.



Breaking down the wall in the room where he slept was easy. All it meant was enlarging the opening he had already put in it. But there was the rat.

It appeared suddenly. And it was bad. It scratched, twittered and restless, as he tore down the sooty plaster and the rotting lath underneath. It scratched when he stopped and lifted the corpse and carried it sideways to the wall. And then, suddenly, it leaped.



For a wild, hostile moment, its teeth were tearing at Krebs's throat, its claws ripping for a foothold on his ragged-stained Bibby clothing.

The corpse fell, thrashing stiffly. Krebs spat out. And the fatal breath of the thing was in his nostrils, its shining yellow fangs were clacking at his jugular vein.

His fist smashed down on the rat's spine like a hammer.



The rat shouldered from the blow and lay still.

Krebs struggled to his feet, his breath coming in great rasping sobs, his intestines writhing.

It took hours to build the corpse behind a wall of fresh plaster, cunningly smeared and splattered with dirt so that it looked as old and scabrous as the other walls.

Then Krebs turned back to the rat. But it was gone. It had been strangled, not killed.



In the morning, Krebs went to the children.
"You mother's gone," he told them bravely. And
between the maternal, comforting words: "She ran
out on you! Like I always knew she would!"
The police men he found later believed his story.
And so, too, did Gus back at home.

That same afternoon a woman from the Welfare
Board came and took the children away.



They went with him whispering, and Krebs
breathed a sigh of relief. He hadn't realized how
tired his nerves had become. He needed a drink. Lots
of drinks. But money was a problem.

He solved that problem, though. There was a
woman he followed into the park. A woman who
reappeared when he scratched her pants and ran.

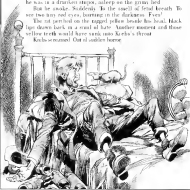


In the pants, there was more than eighty dollars. And so,
that night, Krebs bought two dozen bottles of fancy whiskey
to the barroom. Within an hour, he was asleep. Within two,
he was in a drunken stupor, asleep on the grimy bed.

But he awoke. Suddenly. To the smell of fried breath. To
see two big red eyes, glaring in the darkness. Eyes!

The rat perched on the tapped pillow beside his head. Back
legs drawn back in a snarl of hate. Another moment and those
yellow teeth would have sunk into Krebs's throat.

Krebs screamed. Out of sudden terror.



The rat vanished. But it did not go
far. Near its hole, it stopped, sat up to
stare at him. With a bulging head, that was
collaring, cunning, and patient.

Breath!

That was when Krebs first began to
sweat.

"You!" he howled. "You!"



But that was insane! A ratper is a conger! The life, the form of a dead woman does not enter the body of a rat!

And yet, afterward, the rat was always there. The two doors besides themselves in fact, right? But drunkness was not enough to blot out that nagging portion of thought. . . .

Once, Krebs had a wild idea. He went to the wall where he'd hidden his handwork, and put his ear to it. He listened, hearing only the sound of his own heartbeat.

Until he heard the other sound! The soft, restless snoring.

No! The doors are closed! The rat! It must be the rat! Moving inside the wall!

But the rat sat at the other end of the room, snoring.

And each time that Krebs went to the wall, the rat snored. As if it knew!

"You said . . . you'd take care of the kids!" Krebs yelled at it finally. "All right! The kids are gone! Why don't you go find them? Leave me alone!"



The rat drove back a little, but otherwise, it did not move. It watched. Perpetually. A hundred times during the long dark nights, it crawled up onto the filthy bed, a hundred times, Krebs waiting until it was close to his throat. . . . and then struck savagely. But always, the rat avoided the blow. Always, it retreated in time, and went, patiently.

There was no doubt, after a while, that the rat was stalking Krebs. It killed him that he could not leave. But so long as there was that patient look in the rat's eyes. Not so long as the rat lived. It was a contest. . . . a duel. In Krebs's bedded lair, the rat became his wife, and his wife became the rat. He set traps for it, contrived killing snares. But the rat avoided them. Then, he plugged the hole in the wall with shards of broken glass so that the rat could not close in safety in case of danger. But those yellow fangs crested new holes.

Some nights, Krebs lay on his bed, bottle in hand, and spoke to the rat. Pleasantly. Almost pleasantly. "Please," he would whisper. "Leave me alone. . . . I never hurt the kids!" And when the rat would remain unmovable, the bottle would suddenly be hurled, to splash on the wall. . . . "All right! So you were a good mother! Well you weren't good enough to keep me from seeking your lair in a house, were you? You think you'll get me up, don't you? But you won't! I'll kill you first! I'll kill you first!"



Only only huh? he already done that? Sometimes he remembered. Other times he didn't. His head spun in alcoholic confusion. He would have to kill the rat. That much he knew. So he planned its death cunningly, stressed with whiskey. But his plans never worked.

Finally, there was a night when Krebs drank too much, even for him. He pounded on the wall, daring his wife to come out, daring the rat to come out.

And it did. It dived between his legs, and when Krebs went after it, he stumbled and fell.



It was not a deep slash. He had luckily stirred too soon. But the next time.

There could be no next time! Next time, the rat would win? If he remained as he was.

Krebs drank no more that night. Dull as his senses were, he knew enough for that. Despite the harrowing, yearning ache deep in his gut, he did not touch the last of the full bottles. Not that night nor the next day. By then, he was alone, sober.

In the cellar, he found the tarnished remains of a cold brass lamp.



He lay on the mat, rotten, flea, unable to move, paralyzed with drink.

And it was only the pain that woke him from his lethargy. He put a hand to his throat, stupidly. And his fingers brushed furry softness, came away wet.

Blood! His blood! The rat!

He screamed.

And the rat scurried away.



The lamp stood, ripped from its base, made a heavy, foot-ten long slab of solid metal.

There was a grim resolve in Krebs's every move when he climbed the rotting staircase with its rickety balustrade to the bedroom.

Clara scattered all about him as he walked. But these cats did not matter. Only the rat mattered!

By the flickering light of the candle stick, Krebs sat in the dismal bedroom later, waiting.

And in time, the rat's kumpy back crawled out of its hole in the wall.



Krebs struck. His brass pole splintered the notes. Booming: "Again! Again! And still again! Well, seemingly endless blows that the rat dodged easily. But there was a catch to Krebs's attack. Each blow drove the rat closer to the open bedroom door. And at last, there was no place else for it to go.

It dodged through the opening, avoiding a savage final assault.



There it passed. It moved back, leaping space against the peeling balustrade. And Krebs growled in triumph.

"I was right," he muttered. "You won't leave this room, will you? You won't leave your body, will you? You are here, aren't you? You are!"

It was so simple. Always, the rat had appeared in that bedroom! As a mere rat!

"Now, we'll see!" Krebs stood in the doorway. "Come! Let's see you get back inside!"



The brass club was raised ready. Krebs was almost crowding now.

"Come! Come! Come, come!"

It could even smile. "Come on, little! Mother! You want your revenge, don't you? You want to pay me back for what I did to your hands, don't you?"

The rat did not move. Only its breath 1978. Black-rood. As if it were plotting. Calculating.



The rat leaped. But not toward the door. Toward the stairs. Krebs swung, missing half around as his captives. The club struck, and rebounded from the beam. And at that moment, when he was still billowing with his back to the balustrade, the rat struck! One awfully quick turn, and it was in the air, eyes habitually alive, large gleaming.



Krebs dropped the stick, threw up his arms, and the impact of the rat's body threw him back so that he had to grasp at the balustrade for support.

The balustrade — which looked heavy with its weight with a mouse — this, wearing gasp.

Krebs dropped into unconsciousness, screaming. The two girls fell after him.



Krebs struck first. Flat on his back, so that his spine was shattered in a dozen places.

Just before the jagged end of the brass pole pinned him to the floor.

From above, the rat looked down. But Krebs did not move. Blood, the balustrade fire van-died from its rat's eyes.



Even at the rat turned, went back into the bedroom, to its hole in the wall. It mewed shrilly. There was no need to kneel. Not any more. The intruder was no longer cause for concern.

Through the tunnel grazed in the middle hall. Past its cage (waiting slowly in the darkness).

The rat quickened its pace.

To the nest, where four remaining top heads of its ill waited.

The rat's hunger were hungers. And now that the danger to them had been removed, there was no other thought in the two brains of — the mother.



THE END

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